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[“PATTY WOOD WAS SHARP ENOUGH FOR ANYTHING!” MRS. SMITH SAID.]

POOR LADY BARBARA.

CHAPTER VI.

FOILED!

That was the thought in Keith Norman's mind as he retraced his steps to Studley station, after parting from the flyman and Lady Barbara's agent. His next work was to engage a bed at the “Munro Arms,” for he was quite resolved on one thing, he would not leave the neighbourhood until he had discovered whether Blanche was likely to find a permanent home with the mysterious household at the Grange.

FOILED!

He had always been told he was clever, and without being conceited, the young man was well aware he had never before failed in anything he undertook.

Even Kenneth Bruce, a man little given to flattery, had told Keith he was a born lawyer, and now, in the first really difficult case submitted to him, he had failed ignominiously—the first real mystery he had presented to him had baffled him entirely, while even James Meek-

ing, who knew nothing of the law, and was altogether a far less intellectual man, had rushed on two or three discoveries which left to himself Keith would never have dreamed of.

Mr. Norman dined at the “Munro Arms” in the private parlour he had engaged there. He put pen and ink on the table, stirred the fire into a blaze, and sat down to think out the position.

It was barely four-and-twenty hours since he had first heard the story of Studley Grange. Listening to Kenneth Bruce it had seemed to him the easiest thing in the world to unearth the mystery if he could once set foot in the house, and yet after conquering all obstacles and obtaining an entrance, he had let his surprise at Mrs. Lenard's youthful, innocent appearance so overpower him that he lost his head altogether, and allowed her to treat him as an offender for intruding on his privacy, whereas he should rather have denounced her as kidnapping Lady Barbara, and isolating the latter from all her friends.

He had made mistake on mistake; he had let Blanche leave him without the least secu-

ritty that she would really be taken to his aunt; he had connived at Mrs. Lenard's escape from the room to consult with her confederate.

From first to last the interview had been a failure, and the long letter he sent by the evening post to Mr. Bruce was full of remorseful accusations.

Keith was usually an excellent sleeper; but to-night, for the first time since he was at Landale Park, his rest was fitful and broken.

He did not sit up late, for there was nothing to read, and his own thoughts were not pleasant company. His room was plainly furnished, scrupulously clean; but in all respects widely different from the luxurious bedchamber he had occupied at the Park.

It was two stories high, and the one window was filled with panes of the smallest dimension, and was, besides, shuttered. There was nothing in it to recall the glass doors which had opened on the balcony whence he saw, or dreamed he saw, the careworn, world-tossed woman who implored him to be true to Lady Joan.

No, the room was in all things a contrast to

that other chamber, and his thoughts had not been running at all upon the Landale family, yet he never had his closed his eyes than he saw the self-same face which had so haunted his memory—the woman whose features so resembled Lady Joan's stood before him; in one hand she held Lady Joan herself, her eyes red with tears, in the other she led the little wail who had that day been received at Studley Grange, and it seemed to Keith she implored his protection for them both; that by some wonderful power she made him understand both were in peril.

He awoke with a terrible sense of danger. He seemed to know by instinct Blanche was in suffering, and yet he could think of no way of helping her.

She was as much in Mrs. Lenard's power as Lady Barbara herself.

It was useless for Keith to try to sleep again, so he raked the fire carefully together, and sitting down by it gave himself up to one object—to decide how he could rescue the poor lonely child he believed to be in danger.

Of Lady Joan he hardly thought at all until it struck him as strange she should have appeared with Blanche's mother. It must be Blanche's mother. He never doubted that, but what tie could possibly connect her with Lord Landale's hated child? Why did she seem to warn him of a danger threatening both the girls?

Keith looked so worn and fatigued the next morning that the housekeeper declared he could not have recovered from his visit to the Grange. The news of his entry had spread like wildfire, for Mr. Lenard had made no secret of it, and all Studley regarded the young gentleman from London in the light of a hero.

"Ah, sir," said Mrs. Smith, as she cleared the table, "it's evil times I've taken on the Grange, from the moment I set eyes on that woman I knew she was after no good. She may have dyed her hair and painted herself up a bit, but I've got eyes in my head, and I knew her again."

Keith started.

"Do you mean Mrs. Lenard was ever in Studley before she came to the Grange as Lady Barbara's companion?"

The housekeeper smiled a little.

"Well, sir, I never told anyone but my man, and he declared she ought put me in prison for hinting such a thing, seeing we've no ways proof of it; but I'm pretty sure I'm right for all that, and how old Mrs. Lenard's so blind she doesn't know her again for all her fine feathers I can't understand."

Keith was a great favourite with elderly ladies. Many of Mr. Bruce's clients admitted the young lawyer, but he had never tried to win their good graces as eagerly as he now tried to gain Mrs. Smith's.

"I wish you would tell me," he said, insinuatingly. "You see, Mrs. Smith, I have been sent down from London on purpose to find out something about Mrs. Lenard; just think how angry my employer will be if I return and tell him I've done nothing."

Mrs. Smith relented a little.

"If I could prove it I'd not care, for a body can't be punished for speaking the truth; but you see, sir, though I'm as certain bare of it as that I'm standing here I can't prove it, and that's where the rub is. It's a pity Mr. Bruce didn't come himself, he might have seen the likeness too."

"Mr. Bruce did come eleven years ago; and Mrs. Lenard would not even see him."

"Ah—well, when you go back to town, sir, just ask Mr. Bruce if he remembers Martha Wood that came as maid or humble companion to the ladies at the Grange a year or two before their father's death. Ask him if he knows anyone who's seen her since Lady Barbara and Mrs. Lenard have been shut up here. If he has, why I'm mistaken that's all."

"Then you think Mrs. Lenard is—"

"I don't think anything about Mrs. Lenard," persisted the landlady, eagerly, "but I think Patty Wood was sharp enough

for anything, and I've known straw-coloured hair turn to gold, and a bad complexion painted up to look like china. Ay, but she was a clever one, Patty Wood. Lady Mona turned her off without a quarrel, because she caught her making eyes at her father, not that the old Earl would ever have been taken in by her, he was much too sharp."

Mrs. Smith departed, leaving Keith to his reflections. By ten o'clock they were interrupted by the answer to his letter to Mr. Bruce. It came, of course, by telegram, and consisted of three words,—

"Return at once."

Great fallen and dejected, Kenneth had no choice but to obey. He never doubted but that his chief was angry with his failure, and when he reached the pleasant old-fashioned house at Fulham, just as Mr. Bruce was sitting over dessert, his face looked so troubled that the old lawyer exclaimed,—

"Goodness, my boy, have you heard the news? I meant to tell it to you myself, for owing so much kindness from him, I knew you would be shocked."

"I don't understand," said Keith, a little helplessly. "You sent for me because I had made such an idiot of myself. I had hoped to stay on at Studley until I had discovered something to atone for my blunders, but of course, I started directly I had your message."

"I am very glad you did, I believe, Keith, if you had been on the high road to success I must still have recalled you. Lord Landale is dead, and his nephew is behaving so infernally, I long to strangle him!"

Keith started.

"Dead? and I never saw him again? What can it be? It must have been fearfully sudden."

"It was heart disease. I don't know how much you may have guessed of his private history, but I mean to trust you with all I know. Were you not surprised at his almost morbid dread of his daughter's marrying, of his keeping her aloof from every eligible suitor?"

Yes. He hinted to me she might inherit her mother's complaint, the countess died of consumption, and—"

"The Countess of Landale had no trace of consumption; within twelve months of her marriage she showed signs of insanity, she had more than one attack of dementia at the Park; but through the almost constant secret was kept intact. It was a fearful thing for Lord Landale. He could not bear the sight of her child; attempted to destroy it. The infant was sent out to nurse, and poor Lord Landale spent his every effort in trying to hide his misfortune. At last, in a rational interval he took his wife abroad, and after the first specialists in Paris had pronounced her incurably mad, he placed her in a private asylum, and spread the news of her death, and devoted himself to his child. You won't misunderstand his fears of her marriage, Keith, when I tell you that no less than six members of Lady Landale's family are now under restraint?"

"But how fearful. How could the Earl have married his wife knowing that?"

"He never did know it; she was the daughter of an officer in the army. Captain Gray married beneath him, and when he died insane, his parents washed their hands of the widow, but paid a yearly sum for the child's education. Lord Landale met her as a young governess, who had no relations in the world but a hopelessly vulgar mother. No doubt Mrs. Gray was a trying relation for an English Earl; but it would have been well for him had her vulgarity been the worst drawback to his happiness."

Keith sat looking into the fire, he was unusually silent; in truth, he was thinking how strange it was this news should follow so quickly on his last night's dream.

"She must never know it," he said suddenly. "So bright and beautiful, so happy as she has been, it would kill her."

"She knew it within twelve hours of her father's death. There was some delay in

sending to me. It seems Lord Landale's valet was really a spy in the interests of the Earl's nephew. Of course he communicated with his employers. Captain Disney and his mother went down to Bournemouth; the Earl had a furnished villa there, and actually ordered Lady Joan out of the house."

"They could not—they dared not."

"Gently, they have behaved, I grant you, most cruelly, but you had better hear their side of the question. Lord Landale's marriage exasperated his relations, and the extreme seclusion in which he had kept his child added fuel to the flame. By some unhappy chance Mrs. Disney lately discovered the truth about the ill-fated Countess; she has actually been in communication with the wretched woman, who, in point of law, is Lady Joan's grandmother."

"Even so," said Keith, hotly, "no blame attaches to Lady Joan herself. She was Lord Landale's only child; he worshipped her. Why should she be forced from his home by relations he never cared to see? He told me once that Captain Disney was an heir that any man might be proud of. I think, poor fellow, he would change his mind now."

"Edgar Disney has many noble qualities, but he is exceedingly proud. He would sacrifice his dearest feelings, crush out his most sacred hopes rather than give up the idea of his pride. To such a man the idea of his uncle's misfortune must have been positive torture. When he heard he had introduced the name of insanity into the Disney blood, he would not allilly all compassion in his eyes."

Keith Norman shook his head.

"You are Lord Landale's lawyer, and no doubt understand the disposal of his property, but I should have said no woman in the world could have ousted a daughter from her father's house. If it had been Landale Park the case might have been different."

"You never heard all yet. They assert she is not Lord Landale's child. They actually had the facility to tell her she had no right to the name of Disney. Through Lady Landale's insanity, the infant was put out to nurse. She was five years old when reclaimed by her father at the time of the countess' reported death. They have actually seen poor Lady Landale's mother, who swears positively Joan is not her grandchild, but an orphan substituted by the nurse for the little girl entrusted to her care. Oh! they make up a plausible story, I can assure you, Keith. The woman was poor, and feared to lose the Earl's liberal allowance; the confession signed by her is in their hands; they declare that Lady Joan—I will call her so—bears not the least resemblance to the Earl or his wife; in fact, they have got everything so out and dried that they actually found a lawyer base enough—I feel ashamed of my profession—to take up the case and help them drive that poor child out of the house where her father lay dead."

"And Mrs. Trevanon?" asked Keith, indignantly, "surely she was faithful to her pupil?"

"Mrs. Trevanon," replied Kenneth Bruce, rather scornfully, "is one of a very large number of women who will be faithful and patient under adversity, devoted nurses in all bodily ailments, but who yet have an almost superstitious dread of any mental disease. From the moment she discovered Lady Joan's mother was in a lunatic asylum, the chambermaid was simply frightened to death; she would have caught at any excuse for deserting her post. Mrs. Disney's conduct had given her ample scope for doing so. Either Joan was the daughter of a mad woman, in which case Mrs. Trevanon was really afraid to remain with her, or she was some 'damnable' outcast substituted by her own parents for Lord Landale's infant; when being penniless she could not afford a companion. Mrs. Trevanon, therefore, has gone openly over to the enemy; she is supporting Mrs. Disney at this moment."

"And the new Earl?"

"To do him justice, he was not present at his mother's interview with Joan; he only reached Bourne-mouth after she had left it, but I have no doubt he would have sided with Mrs. Disney. Tell you pride in his ruling passion, and it would not gratify his pride to own a first cousin liable at any moment to go out of her mind. I only heard all this late last night, and I should have wired for you this morning, even had your letter not come. You see, Keith, I have known Lord Landale all his life, and I will fight for his daughter's interests to the death. It will be a cause *célèbre* to be remembered throughout England, and all the sympathy of the country will be for Joan."

"I don't think she was Lord Landale's child."

Mr. Bruce fairly lost his temper.

"Then go and offer yourself to the new Earl as his legal adviser. No doubt he will be happy to transfer his business to you. I won't have it, I can assure you. Keith, I am positively ashamed of you."

Keith understood the old man's anger, and was not one whit offended at it, but he held his ground resolutely.

"I meant no allight to Lady Joan," he said, earnestly; "to me she will ever be an object of respect as the creature Lord Landale loved, but I do not believe she was his own child."

Kenneth Bruce stared at him.

"You're not a turncoat," he said, slowly; "I don't believe you say this just to curry favour with the new Earl; you're not one of those to desert a sinking ship; you must have some reason for what you say. I come to doubt Joan's being Lord Landale's child seems a slight to his memory."

"Think how he loved her," said Keith, eagerly, "and the doom he feared for her. I believe it would have been the most welcome news Lord Landale could have had to hear that she was not the daughter of his much-loved wife, that he might give her to a husband worthy of her without any fear of insanity blighting another home."

Kenneth Bruce gave a kind of grunt. Perhaps this view of the case had never occurred to him.

"You are a radical," he said, testily; "an out-and-out radical, young man. Do you mean to tell me you would rather think of Lady Joan as a nameless outcast than feel whatever happened to her, as the daughter of an English earl, she was assured of a comfortable provision?"

"I judge her by myself. I would rather work hard with my hands for daily bread—I think I would even rather beg in the streets, if I knew I came of parents sound in brain, than enjoy every luxury troubled by the fear of insanity. Remember, Mr. Bruce, it is no question of keeping the poor girl in ignorance. After what has passed, Lady Joan must know the doom which threatens Lord Landale's daughter. I believe she will be of my mind."

Still Mr. Bruce hesitated.

"I must fight the case. It seems like giving up all effort to help her not to."

"We'll fight it by all means," said Keith, cheerfully. "Indeed we must, for it is our only chance of discovering Lady Joan's true parentage."

"You used to say she was too rich for you, Keith, maybe you'll change your mind now."

Keith shook his head.

"Where is she?" he asked, absently.

"Here, of course. She came straight here last night, and as I wanted to show all honour and respect to Lord Landale's child I got my sister to come and keep her company. You know, Helen, Keith, and I think you'll say I've done well."

Keith had been with his friend to visit Miss Bruce in her Richmond Cottage, and she thought her simply the dearest old lady he had ever seen, so he quite agreed that she was a fitting companion for the bereaved girl.

"I should like to see her."

"Whom?"

"Lady Joan. I have the most extraordinary ideas about her."

"Well, keep it to yourself for the present, and tell me what you discovered at Studley. If you had heard nothing of Lord Landale's death, why did you imagine I sent for you in such a hurry?"

"Because I had made an idiot of myself, sir."

"No such thing. The mystery of Studley has lasted eleven years, and I don't think a few months' delay will matter now this question of Joan Disney's birth is pressing. I want your help in that, not but what I should have sent for you in any case when I had your letter, for depend upon it, that woman has her spies about, and while you remained at Studley she would be doubly on her guard. No, we must let her think we have given up the search in despair, and meanwhile, you must devote yourself to Joan's interests."

"I believe they are identical with travelling the mystery of Studley Grange."

Mr. Bruce shook his head.

"You have that on the brain, I think. What earthly connexion can there be, I ask you, between Lady Barbara's seclusion and Joan Disney's birth?"

Keith was silent.

"Ah! said the old lawyer, triumphantly, 'You see you can't answer me.'"

"I could only," the young man hesitated— "I know the mistakes I have made at Studley are enough to make you think me a simpleton. If I tell you what is in my mind you will probably deem me only fit for an asylum."

"Nevertheless, I mean to hear it."

"I told you in my letter that Mr. Meeking declared the poor child who accompanied us to the Grange was Viscount Keith's daughter. He went only by her resemblance to the family features. Should you say he was right?"

"Probably. Lord Keith was base enough for anything. He might have left his wife in ignorance of his name—not that I ever heard he was married."

"Blanche is eighteen."

Mr. Bruce opened his eyes.

"I suppose you are leading up to something, but I can't for the life of me tell what! Why can't you speak plainly, Keith?"

"Because I know you will laugh at me."

"Well, you'd better risk that."

"You may remember I spent a night at Landale Castle in June."

"What of that?"

"Very simply and yet with an unconscious pathos, springing from his very earnestness, Keith related the vision he had seen."

"A dream!" snapped Mr. Bruce, shortly.

"Of course, you had indigestion, and it was a sort of nightmare."

"I tried to think of it as a dream. Last night, and this was a dream, I saw the same woman, she had the two girls in either hand, Blanche and Lady Joan; she seemed to me to be imploring my protection for them."

"Well?"

"I will tell you my theory, though I know you will scoff at it. I believe that night at Landale the face I saw in the grounds was that of Lady Joan's own mother. I think the story told by Mrs. Disney was true in part, that when her little nursing died the poor woman, goaded by poverty and fearing to lose, perhaps, her only source of income, substituted her own child for Lord Landale's. I believe that she was at Landale that night—remember the Earl and Lady Joan had but newly returned from abroad—hoping for a glimpse of her darling. She possibly thought of me as a probable lover of the heiress, and her warning that trouble and disgrace might light on Lady Joan came from a conviction her fraud would soon be discovered."

Kenneth Bruce walked the length of the room two or three times in perfect silence.

"I never heard before of a lawyer who let himself be guided by such folly, and yet I confess, Keith, your story sounds real." "If Lady Joan is a changeling, I can quite believe her true mother might act as you describe, only again, I fail to see what link joins her with the girl you saw yesterday for the first time."

"Blanche Browne has lost her mother."

"So have a great many people," put in Mr. Bruce, caustically, "that proves nothing!"

"Mrs. Browne may have had two children of her own, and exchanged the elder for Lord Landale's dead baby—I own it sounds a romantic fancy, but I feel sure of it in my own mind. The woman I saw in June looked like one stricken with mortal sickness. Mrs. Browne died in the September following."

"And you have concocted this wonderful rignarole out of a dream? Understand, I'm ready to admit what you saw in June, but I can't for the life of me believe your theory that Joan is Lord Keith's elder child. Why, then she would be your own cousin?"

Keith kept to his opinion.

"Mr. Bruce, I know you would scoff at the idea, but I believe so firmly in my theory that I can't put any hope into a different quest. Of course, I am under your orders. Whatever steps you enjoin in the matter of proving Lady Joan's birth I must take, but I warn you I feel all other plans will fail."

"And what do you want to do?"

"I want to see Miss Browne, Blanche, and ask her where her mother lived, and whether she ever had a sister."

"It's not particularly easy to see Miss Browne, it seems to me. Don't you know any of her friends?"

"She has but one, a Dr. Ward."

"Ward, of Bloomsbury-square?"

"Probably. I know he practises in the poorer parts of London."

"If it's Andrew Ward, I was at school with him. He often comes here, but he's only just back in London, after three months' absence, that's why you've never met him."

"I had better write to him."

"Do no such thing. I'll ask him to dinner to-morrow. Remember, Ward's the sharpest fellow out; if your Miss Blanche is an impostor he'll denounce her quick enough."

The next day Keith was allowed a brief interview with Lady Joan. To his surprise, she was far less anxious about her birth than Mr. Bruce.

"What does it matter?" she asked, wistfully. "They need not have told me the truth quite so cruelly, and they might have let me stay while he was there, but you see it explains all that ever troubled me. I know now why my father would never settle anywhere, and, Mr. Norman, he couldn't have loved me more if I had been his own child. They can't alter that!"

"Then you don't mind?"

"I think the losing him would have swallowed up all other griefs, but you know the fate which would have threatened his child; at least, I am safe from that. I never was afraid of poverty, and I never wanted to be a great lady. I have been well educated, and I mean to earn my own living; dear Miss Bruce is going to help me."

"Her brother means you to have your rights. I think he deems it disloyal to Lord Landale even to doubt your birth."

Joan smiled sweetly.

"I know I am not Lady Joan Disney. I seem to feel it here," and she touched her heart. "Perhaps I shall never know my own name."

"But you would like to?"

"Yes, but I feel sure of one thing—I could never love my real father as I did him."

Dr. Ward accepted the invitation, and after dinner, when Keith's impatience was at boiling point, Mr. Bruce asked his old friend what he knew of a girl called Blanche Browne?

"A great deal," was the quiet reply; "but my lips are sealed till I know whether you ask as her friend or foe. That child has known

sorrow enough in her short life; if Lady Barbara Keith is not kind to her, she'd better send her straight back to me."

"It is more her mother we are anxious about."

"Her mother is at rest. She erred deeply. I never knew exactly how, but if ever life-long suffering atoned for sin, her's is blotted out."

"And you have no notion of how she erred?"

"Pardon me, I have a very clear idea, but I do not know, and I cannot see what interest the subject can have for you."

"Only that a whole life's happiness is threatened," and the two men told him the tale of Joan Disney, and the mystery which hung over her birth.

"It might be," admitted the doctor. "I own my suspicions went to a different sin. For years Mrs. Browne was like a creature with a heavy secret to keep. Despite her poverty she was continually roaming about; she would be away for days sometimes at a stretch. She loved Blanche dearly, but Blanche was nothing to her compared with the memory of her eldest child. I never saw her until years after Dolly's death, but she harped on the subject always, often speaking as though the child was alive; she seemed to live in some horror of her secret being found out. I own, poor creature, I fancied that stung by privation she had been tempted to kill the little girl, and the remorse of it had haunted her ever since. Of course, she might easily have palmed off her own child as her little nursing. You have not told me the family name of the young lady you are anxious about."

"Disney, she was the late Lord Landale's only child."

Dr. Ward grew very grave.

"I was away from London when Mrs. Browne died, but I know she had something she was anxious to confide to me. What seems to confirm your fancy is that in her last talk she ever had with Blanche she made her promise to shun all intercourse with Lord Landale and his nephew; neither of them had ever injured her, she said, but between them and Blanche was a barrier nothing could remove."

Mr. Bruce smiled kindly on Keith.

"After all, I shall have to admit there is something in dreams, but, still, we have no proof of this."

"You must insist on seeing the 'confession' on which the new Earl bases his claim that Lady Joan is not his cousin," said Dr. Ward, gravely. "I can swear to Mrs. Browne's handwriting; her real name can only be gleaned from Lady Barbara Keith. I knew she deposited with her the proofs of her marriage, and the certificates of her children's births; but in one matter I can help you. The poor mother always spoke of her lost child as like herself. I have seen Mrs. Browne so often, and have studied her face so well, that I could not fail to trace a resemblance, however slight. Can you induce your ward to see me?"

But a view of Joan's photograph proved sufficient.

Dr. Ward put one hand on Keith's arm, and said:

"You were right, young man; I don't care what you call this girl, she is Mrs. Browne's 'Dolly.' No one but her daughter could bear such a marvellous resemblance to the poor woman. I will write to Blanche to-night, urging her to ask Lady Barbara all the particulars of her own birth."

"So that it seems, Keith," said Kenneth Bruce, to his favourite, when they were left alone, "you would not make such a bad detective after all; now, as I doubt if this doctor's letter is ever allowed to reach Miss Blanche, I think you had better return to Studley to-morrow."

"Only two days after leaving it; won't Mrs. Lenard be put on her guard, she is quite sure to hear of it, you know?"

"If you go as you are now, of course she

will, but what about a disguise? A thick black beard, abundant whiskers, and wig to match, a little walnut juice judiciously applied to face and hands, would alter you wonderfully, Keith; then if you can contrive to catch a cold and speak rather hoarsely, you will be a perfect contrast to yourself."

"I never felt my own stupidity so much before," said Keith, humbly. "Now I see what real talent can do."

Mr. Bruce sighed.

"Don't disparage yourself, my lad. A cheap ready-made suit of clothes, rather a large pattern, and a bulky carpet bag, with about a dozen different labels, besides much signs of wear and tear, will all help you, I think."

"And whom am I to be?" asked Keith, cheerfully, "that is to say, what is my supposed errand in Studley?"

"Let people think you have lately returned from America, and are looking for a nice bit of land on which to build a house and settle down. It happens that ten miles the other side of Studley there are several plots of land to be sold, so I don't think anyone will suspect you, especially as you can say with truth that Yorkshire is your family home."

"Only I know nothing of Yorkshire. I couldn't stand a cross-examination of its beauties."

The old lawyer chuckled.

"Fortunately the county is so large that no one can blame you for not being acquainted with the whole of it. Studley is due north, well-nigh into Durham. You may have seen the light in the extreme south, say, within sight of the bustle of Hull, or the sound of the Humber."

This settled, both men grew graver, and Keith said,—

"I wish you would give me your true opinion of things at the Grange."

"They look very black."

"Do you think they've killed my aunt?" and the young man's eyes flashed with indignation. "I should like to have the handling of the widow if I believed it!"

Mr. Bruce shook his head.

"I believe Lady Barbara is alive now, but I fear lest this girl's arrival and your visit combined might induce Mrs. Lenard to hasten matters."

"Why Blanche's coming?"

"Because if she is really poor Keith's child she would be Lady Barbara's heir-at-law. With that poor girl in her power the widow would have things as much her own way as she does now if your aunt were dead."

Norman shuddered.

"It seems hard to believe she is a woman."

"And a very captivating one, eh, Keith?"

"I believe I was bewildered for a moment, she looked so young and innocent. She had such pretty white hands, how could I believe they would do the vile work we thought?"

"Well, well, don't reproach yourself, boy; suspicions don't come natural to the young."

Keith ground his teeth.

"When I think I have left that child in her power, I can't forgive myself."

"Her being there may help us wonderfully. You are bound to see her on Lady Joan's business. Indeed, I think I shall write boldly to Barbara, and tell her we believe Lord Keith left two daughters; but in your new character it will be easy for you to see Miss Blanche, and she may be able to set our minds at rest about your aunt. This much is certain—Mrs. Lenard and Jinks must decide pretty promptly either to deceive Miss Blanche or take her into their confidence."

"They won't do the last."

"Why not?"

"You don't know her, sir. She is too pure and true to lend herself to wrong. They may ill-treat her, they may make her life one long misery, but they will never get her to help them in their cruelty."

"Her father was a scamp, and her mother—if we are to believe Dr. Ward—was weak and erring."

"But not cruel," persisted Keith. "It was

wrong enough to substitute her own child for Lord Landale's; but, if she did so, it was when she was well-nigh starving, and she knew it would secure an easy home for the child."

"Ay, I suppose Joan's life has been as happy as mortals can be. I shall not say a word to her until you have seen Miss Blanche, and I have been allowed a sight of the 'confession' which Mrs. Disney stakes her case on. But I fancy you are right, Keith, and that our little lady and the poor child at the Grange are sisters. Strange that you, who pretend to dislike young ladies, should be the champion of two so different as our guest and Dr. Ward's protégée."

"Different fates enough a week ago," agreed Keith; "but there is little disparity now. Both are orphans, both—if our fears are correct—are penniless, and alone in the world."

"Well, I should like to fight the case to the bitter end; but if we prove that Joan is Lord Keith's child, he can afford to scoff at the Earl of Landale's indignation at 'nobody's daughter' being represented as his cousin. I tell you, Keith, when I think of that young man and his mother, I long to break every bone in his body! I've made up my mind of one thing—I send in all the papers relating to his property to-morrow. I shall go to the Earl's funeral, but I won't break bread in the house, or shake hands with his successor. He's a disgrace to the peerage!"

"Never mind," said Keith, bravely. "I am off to Yorkshire to-morrow; and if perseverance and patience can do it, I will break through the seclusion of Lady Barbara, and prove that those two lonely girls are her nieces. I don't fancy the new Lord Landale, proud as he is, will dare to look down upon my aunt's co-heiresses."

Mr. Bruce sighed. He liked the young man's courage and the generosity which made him forget he too had a claim on Lady Barbara.

All the old man's anxiety about Studley Grange, dispelled a little by his first excitement about Joan's troubles, awoke afresh, and when he bid Keith good-bye the next day it was with a presentiment he would bring some fatal news on his return.

(To be continued.)

CLEANLINESS OF ANIMALS.—The perfect cleanliness of animals is a very notable circumstance, when we consider that nearly their whole lives are passed in burrowing in the earth and removing nuisances; yet such is the admirable polish of their coating and limbs that we seldom find any soil adhering to them. All the beetle race, the chief occupation of which is crawling in the soil about such dirty employs, are, notwithstanding, remarkable for the glossiness of their covering and freedom from defilements of any kind. Purity of vesture seems to be a principal precept of nature, and observable throughout creation. Fishes, from the nature of the element in which they reside, can contract but little impurity. Birds are unceasingly attentive to neatness and lustration of their plumage. All the slug race, though covered with slimy matter calculated to collect extraneous things, and reptiles, are perfectly free from soil. The fur and hair of beasts in a state of liberty and health is never filthy or sullied with dirt. Some birds roll themselves in dust, and occasionally particular beasts cover themselves with mire; but this is not from any liking or inclination for such things, but to free themselves from annoyances, or to prevent the bites of insects. Whether birds in preening, and beasts in dressing themselves, be directed by any instinctive faculty is not known; but they evidently derive pleasure from the operation, and thus this feeling of enjoyment, even if the sole motive, becomes to them an essential source of comfort and health.

WHEN SHALL WE TWO MEET AGAIN?

—:O:—

CHAPTER X.

JACOB SMITH, THE DETECTIVE.

CYRILLA, Lady Dacre, felt as if the ground had opened under her feet when she discovered that Colonel Gordon's friend was Ralph Treverne. How to go on and seem as if nothing had happened she could not conceive, but Sir Septimus Benson was most kind to her, and explained her misadventure to the others as the most natural thing in the world.

The sun was so dazzling that Lady Dacre did not see where she was going, and putting her foot too near the edge of the bridge, she was bound to fall into the water. "And now," he went on to say, "in order to prevent any serious consequences, she must walk home, so as to keep up the circulation, and change her clothes as soon as possible."

Colonel Gordon looked at her poor white face, and immediately prescribed a glass of wine. He was dying to know what had happened—whether she had met Treverne; whether she had recognised him; whether it was he who had pulled her out of the water, and there wasn't a soul he could ask. He looked from one to the other, with keen, inquiring glances, whilst he seemed to be entirely occupied in pressing some refreshments on his guests; but the surgeon's imperturbable face baffled him, and Lady Dacre's evident agitation might proceed from her fright at her involuntary bath.

Sir Thomas seemed to consider the accident as a personal insult.

"Now," he said, crossly, "you'll be laid up for months, and able to do nothing for me. I wish to goodness you would look where you were going!"

The colour rushed up into her pale face, but she only answered quietly:

"I don't mean to be laid up at all. And now good-bye, Colonel Gordon; I am going home."

They were already in the porch, for she had refused to come into the house in her dragged garments, from which the water was still dripping.

"Don't forget to give your friend my card," called out Sir Thomas, as he got into his invalid chair.

"It's all right," said Gordon, carelessly; "Treverne is sure to see it on the hall table. Good-bye, Lady Dacre; I hope you will be none the worse."

Treverne did not come back till very late, and when he arrived scarcely ate any dinner.

The Colonel noticed that he looked fagged and worn, and forbore to ask him any questions, which was an instance of the greatest self-denial. Under his rather rough exterior the old soldier had a heart as tender as a woman's, and in his conduct towards Treverne he always showed a wonderful amount of tact.

They were sitting under the verandah with their pipes, when he told him that Sir Thomas had left a card upon him.

Treverne started, but controlling himself with an effort, said quietly: "He might have spared himself the trouble."

There was a pause, after which he blurted out: "I won't desert you, but I can't stay here day after day. Have you any objection to my making that old ruin presentable, and taking up my abode there?"

"Do just as you like," was the prompt answer; "but I say, old fellow, don't stay there always, or we shall both be found hanging to ropes from the ceilings in our different houses."

"I should come over almost every evening, and other times you know. You could join me whenever you got tired of Woodlands. I fancy we might be tolerably snug up there, and I've already got my eye on a coastguard's

man who wishes to retire, who would suit me capitally for a servant."

"I should think he would be a capital cook," dryly.

"He'll be able to cook a mutton chop or broil a steak."

"Humph! Since when have you thought of this?"

Treverne flushed, though no one could see it in the darkness.

"I saw her this afternoon," he said in a low voice, as if he were treading on something sacred. "She fell into the little stream by the gate of the stable-yard, and I pulled her out!"

"Good gracious!" in a state of great excitement. "Why didn't you tell me before? She recognised you, of course!"

"I don't know," wearily. "It's just possible that she saw me, and perhaps that was the reason of her fall. But she was insensible, and I might have been a stick for all she knew about me afterwards."

"She was with that prig of a doctor," thoughtfully.

"Yes, the cat's out of the bag, as far as he goes. He allowed as much when he told me to go for my sake, as well as hers."

"This is very curious. Do you know that he was dead against employing a detective, and when Sir Thomas told him that if the detective failed, he meant to have a bill posted on every paling, he said it would be brutal! There's more in the fellow than I thought."

"I can't understand it," said Treverne, drawing his brows together. "I never mistrusted a fellow more, he seemed to be as anxious as you could have been to get me off. How did you hear that about the detective?"

"We were all talking it over when Lady Dacre was in the garden and he took the very words out of my mouth."

"That might have been on purpose to put us off our guard. He may want us to act as if no detective were coming. Shan't we come in and go over this mining business together?" he asked, as he stood up. "I'm awfully eager to begin."

"It was such a comfort to see him eager about anything after these long months of dependency, that Gordon willingly complied.

They retired to the smoking room, and sat up far into the night, making calculations which seemed to involve the expenditure of enormous sums of money. The elder man was very anxious that the younger should keep a little nest-egg safe at his bankers; but Treverne laughed the idea to scorn. Why should not his money be risked as well as Gordon's, he would like to know?

To which Gordon said, rather deprecatingly,—

"You may marry, some day."

"And so may you—the one is just as likely as the other," he answered, fiercely.

"The proper business-like way of setting to work," remarked the Colonel quietly, as if he had never mentioned a more dangerous subject, "is to form a company and issue shares; but there are several objections to that. First of all, we should have a lot of strangers prying down here, which we don't want at all; secondly, we should feel like strangers on our own bit of ground. And, thirdly, we can't but allow that it's a speculation from first to last; we've got a perfect right to ruin ourselves, but I couldn't rest in my bed, and I'm sure you couldn't either, if there were a chance of ruining heaps of other people who might have wives and children depending on them as well."

"Not for the world! We will keep it to ourselves, if we can, and before five years are over perhaps you may be known as Gordon, the Silver King!"

"And if that happens, and anything could induce Wildgrave to resign, I'll be master of the West Devon Hounds, and keep the finest pack in the county here in the kennels at Woodlands," and the Colonel's eyes glowed with enthusiasm, "see if I don't!"

Treverne went to town the next morning to

see about the furniture for the Tower, and on the way to the station he met a quiet-looking individual, who scanned him carefully from head to foot.

Treverne could not have told a third person what was the colour of Jacob Smith's hair, but Jacob Smith made a note of every striking feature about Treverne, and could have passed an examination on his personal appearance with success.

When Mr. Smith reached Mountsorrel he was closeted with Sir Thomas for a long while in the library; but Lady Dacre was not admitted to the conference; in fact, she was kept in ignorance of his presence, and went about her own little occupations in unconsciousness.

She forced herself to be very busy in order to keep her thoughts away from dangerous topics, but she could not make the first column of her accounts come right, because, instead of thinking of pounds, shillings, and pence, her attention was always wandering to Ralph Treverne.

What madness it was for him to stay in the neighbourhood when the next person who recognised him might run with the news to Sir Thomas!

How could she venture to stray beyond her own gates for fear of meeting the man whose presence had once made a whole year seem like one long summer day, whose absence had destroyed all the happiness of her life?

The most terrible complications might occur in the future if her husband persisted in his odd fancy for making acquaintance with Mr. Treverne.

How could she ever hope to meet him with any appearance of calmness if he chose to present himself as a casual acquaintance?

If she invited him to dinner by her husband's orders Colonel Gordon might make him accept for the sake of prudence, and it would almost kill her to see him enter the house where once he had been a daily visitor.

Thank Heaven most of the old servants who knew Ralph Treverne by sight had either died off or left; even Jamieson had gone during the last fortnight, and there would be no one to recognise him, unless a flash of recognition passed across her husband's brain, which she did not think quite likely.

He had only seen him once, and that was in the evening, and now he was so changed that even an old friend might see him, and pass him by.

Still the fear of it would always keep her on thorns, and she would know no rest for dread of what might happen.

One firm resolution she made, and that was that she would keep her recognition of Treverne a dead secret from Gordon as well as from herself.

It would be much easier to meet him like a stranger if he expected to be treated as such, and it would be safer from every point of view, she decided with a blush, though there was no one to see.

Only on those terms could she meet her old lover honourably without her husband's knowledge. As her accounts were only growing into a hopeless muddle she threw down her pen, and catching up her hat, went for a walk in the garden.

Presently, Sir Thomas came out of the house leaning on his stick, and slowly made his way to the flower-bed before which she was standing, lost in a reverie.

"Well, Cyrilla, can't you find any more profitable occupation than staring at a row of geraniums?" he asked in his harsh voice.

"I've been struggling with my accounts," she said, with an offended toss of her head, for she felt unusually irritable. "May I ask if you've been doing anything half so unpleasant?"

"I've been engaged on business, which may be unpleasant to somebody else, but certainly not to myself," he answered, with an acid smile. "Would you like to know what it was?"

"Just as you like," affecting an indifference she was far from feeling, because she knew

that would be the best way of inducing him to tell her.

"What do you say to Mr. Jacob Smith?"

"I daresay you said a great deal. But who is the man? I don't know him," her heart beating fast as a suspicion of the truth flashed through her mind.

"Lucky for you, my dear," with a chuckle. "Most people wish to disclaim any acquaintance with a man of his profession."

"What is he? Somebody not quite respectable?" in a fever of impatience which she controlled by an effort of will.

"Oh, quite respectable," with a harsh laugh; "though to do with the most respectable people. Mr. Jacob Smith is a detective!"

White as a sheet, she turned round and faced him with flashing eyes.

"You sent for him when even Sir Septimus said it would be infinitely better to leave it alone!"

"I've yet to learn that I'm bound to take Sir Septimus's advice in everything. Let him attend to my arms and legs, and get them into proper order," he said, turning away with a frown. "That's what I pay him for."

"Any man with a spark of gentlemanly feeling," she began, hotly, but checked herself midway. He was her husband; she must bear and forbear.

"Go on," he sneered, "pray go on. It does me good to hear these lofty sentiments, when I know that you are so supremely indifferent as to the result. You wouldn't make such a fuss about a detective if there were no old lover to be saved from the dock."

"Thomas, don't goad me too far!" she gasped, as she clasped her hands tightly together.

"If that infernal scoundrel were lurking about the premises I might be afraid," he said, with an evil gleam in his eyes; "but he is not, I am happy to say."

CHAPTER XI.

AN IMPORTANT CLUE.

How could she let the Colonel know of the pressing danger without acquainting him with the fact that she had recognised Ralph Trevanion?

That was the problem that occupied Cyrrilla's mind all through the long luncheon.

Sir Thomas's contribution to the conversation consisted of constant abuse of the cookery; and these repeated grumbings tried his wife's patience to the utmost.

In the irritated state of her nerves she could scarcely stand it, especially when she was longing, with all her heart, for the luncheon to be over in order that she might send a warning to Woodlands.

She was a good girl and a conscientious wife; but surely it was natural that she should feel anxious about an old friend whose liberty was in danger.

She never wished to see him again; but that was no reason why she should not strain every effort to save him from being put into prison.

Sir Thomas seemed to take a delight in detaining her.

He lingered over his fruit; and then, leaning back in his chair, talked about some adventures that had befallen him in South America.

Cyrrilla had heard the whole story before—about a hundred times—but she listened, or appeared to listen, with dutiful interest.

When it was ended, she was desperately afraid lest he would begin again, so rose hastily, saying she wanted to write a letter before they went out for a drive.

"You always want to write if I wish to talk," grumbled Sir Thomas, but he let her go, and she hurried away to her own private sitting-room.

As soon as she was seated at her writing-table she took up her pen, but what to say she

could not tell. When the letter was written it ran thus:—

"DEAR COLONEL GORDON,

"One line to say that if you could spare me the June number of the *Eccentric Magazine* I should be very much obliged. We are just going out for a drive, so I hope it will continue fine. In haste, yours very sincerely,

"CYRILLA DACRE."

"P.S.—Mr. Jacob Smith, a detective from Scotland-yard, has been here this morning."

Colonel Gordon smiled quietly as he folded the letter up.

"Woman-like she puts the most important thing in the postscript," he said to himself. "Now, why did she cover it up so carefully, when we talked about it openly the other morning? I'd give anything to know if she had recognised Treherne!"

The very caution which she had used to veil her knowledge aroused his suspicions, but many a year was to elapse before they were verified.

Treherne came back from London, and was followed, after a long interval, by a load of furniture.

Before it arrived the interior of the tower had been done up most artistically, and it was soon turned into a picturesque shooting lodge, where two bachelors could make themselves very comfortable.

Here Treherne was close at hand to watch over the miners who were already hard at work with spade and pick-axe on the hill-side. Wooden huts were being run up as fast as possible for their accommodation, and the little valley, where no sound used to be heard but the splash of the waves or the song of the birds, resounded with the clang of workmen's tools.

Treherne had been careful to engage an engineer named Stevens, who was thoroughly conversant with the working of a mine, and a sub-manager called Harwood, who understood all the details of such an important undertaking; but he determined, with Gordon's full consent, to be the working manager of the whole affair, whilst the Colonel was manager-in-chief.

They were both as fully engaged with this new enterprise as if there were no such thing as Jacob Smith in existence. And yet all the while the detective was not idle.

He complained that such a long interval had been allowed to elapse between the date of the offence and any pursuit of the offender that the difficulty of finding him had been increased a hundredfold.

He had begun his inquiries at the Stanpoole railway station, and had elicited nothing at all from Mr. Mason, the station-master. The latter, unlike most of his class, was a disagreeable man, who always seemed to regard a question of any sort as an impertinence.

To be asked in August how many passengers came down on a certain date in May seemed as reasonable to him as to be requested to tell any one how many single currants there were in a bushel.

It was his duty to know how many passengers booked from his station every day, and if Mr. Mason wished to hear how many departed from Stanpoole on a certain day, he would be happy to oblige him.

"Well, it would serve my turn very well if you could tell me if the gentleman went back that day to where he came from," said Smith, reflectively.

He had one eye smaller than the other, which gave a most curious expression to an otherwise common-place face. The left eye was the small one, and now that it was fixed on Mr. Mason, he felt inclined to wriggle like an eel.

"He must have booked here, you know," said the station-master, almost as if he would be glad of any excuse for not supplying the information.

"Well, but supposing he came from Southampton, and went back to Southampton, he would have a return ticket?"

"Mountsorrel.

"He might have."

"Do you mean to say you could do nothing for me?" in an angry tone.

"Nothing at all. Well, here's the book!" turning over the leaves till he came to the month of May. "Three passengers booked for London, one for Exeter, one for Poole."

"And you don't know even whether they were male or female?"

"No, if there were any difference in the price of a ticket because a woman took it, or a man, I should know fast enough; but I've something else to do besides taking an inventory of the passengers," shutting the book with a bang.

Mr. Smith ended by taking the train to Southampton, where he found the very ship that Trevanion had come over in, lying in dock, undergoing some slight repairs.

The captain of *The Silver Star* recollected Trevanion perfectly.

"As nice a fellow as ever stepped," he declared warmly. "Want to know what he's like? Put the frankest pair of blue eyes on either side of a capital nose—delicate, you know, as if cut out by a sculptor that knew his business—then put that nose a top of a yellow moustache, and under that a mouth, such as no young woman could object to, and there you have him!"

"A striking portrait, Captain!" said the detective, with a smile. "How about height and figure?"

"Six feet if he's an inch. Well set-up, and straight as a dart. Plenty of muscle and go, but slight rather than heavy. I had his photo, but I've lost it."

"You couldn't tell me where it was taken?" asked the detective, eagerly, as he reflected that it would be the easiest thing possible to telegraph to a photographer at Cape Town, and ask for a copy, if he could only find out his name.

"No," said the Captain, with a good-natured smile; "I looked at the face instead of the back; but he had scores of friends—the most popular chap that ever was—you are sure to be able to get hold of one."

After spending some time in Southampton, the detective returned to Stanpoole. He sent Ralph Trevanion's description to every police station in England, and was constantly hearing of slight, yellow-haired young men, who proved to have nothing else in common with the man whom he was looking for.

After this he took to making James Cook's life a misery to him, by continually bothering him about that heap of luggage left at the station under his care, presumably by the owner on the fatal 17th of May.

The porter admitted that it had South African labels on it, and R. T. printed on it in large black letters, for all the world to read if it liked. He was able to recollect it because there was such a talk at the time of the man who had attacked Sir Thomas Dacre, of Mountsorrel, and he had thought at first the luggage had something to do with him, but Colonel Gordon had come up the next morning and carried it to Woodlands.

"You don't say so?" said Smith, eagerly. "It was this. You had no business to let it go. There's something queer about this. You knew it wasn't he that had left it the day before. You might have got yourself into an awful scrape."

"No scrape at all!" said Cook, stolidly. "I know the Colonel and the Colonel knows me. I never said the luggage was his, bless your heart! but it belonged to a friend of his."

"But the initials 'R. T.'? It isn't everyone that could claim them. R. T.—Ralph Trevanion—I could take my dying oath those traps belong to the very man we want," cried the detective, growing still more excited. "Show me those things, and I'll show you the man that assaulted the Baronet!"

"Just you say that to the Colonel, and you'll get such a spanner as you haven't often met with in your life. There's nowt on earth

he won't do for his friend, Mr. Treherne. They're as thick as thieves together."

"Treherne," said Smith, reflectively, "it begins with the same letter. Come, Mr. Cook, just exert your powerful intellect. This Treherne can't have kept himself shut himself up in a band-box. You've seen him from time to time. Is he the same fellow as left the luggage on the 17th? You must remember that!"

Cook scratched his head under the painful influence of the detective's smaller eye, but he could get no inspiration from his skull, and only shook it undecidedly.

"You see I hadn't much talk with the gentleman, there was a horse fair 'oop at Cross-trees, and a sight of drovers come this way."

"But I'm not talking of a drover!" impatiently. "It's a gentleman as left the luggage, and just oblige me with the colour of his hair. Why, think it over a minute or two; if it had been Treherne, for instance, you would have been so startled by his white hair and his dark skin that you'd have known him a twelvemonth later without any help from me."

"It must have been this Mr. Treherne, because, you see, the Colonel knew the luggage was his, and said so," and the porter looked defiantly at his tormentor.

Jacob Smith felt very much inclined to swear, but he restrained himself.

"Now just look here, Mr. Cook," he said, impressively. "If you attempt to screen anyone it won't be no manner of use. Just you answer me 'yes' or 'no.' Was it a man with white hair who left that luggage?" and his small eye looked as sharp as a gimlet.

"I screen anybody! You must be out of your senses to suggest such a thing!" exclaimed Cook, with virtuous indignation. "I know nothing of Trevanion, no more than a babe unborn."

"Was it a man with white hair who left that luggage?" the detective said, importunately, as if the porter had not spoken.

Cook wriggled with the exertion of diving into the depths of his brain.

"On the 17th of May," he said, doggedly, "as I was a telling you, there was a sight of drovers and horse men about the place, and one gentleman comes up to me. 'Just take care of my traps till they are sent for,' says he. 'All right,' says I, and thought no more about the matter till the next morning. As to his hair or his face, it's beyond reason to expect me to recollect 'em. All I can say is that it wasn't a signat man or a fellow as black as a nigger. There, make what you like out of that!"

"Humph," said Jacob Smith, as a gleam of satisfaction crossed his usually impassive face. "I make out something which I won't tell you, my friend. It's dry work talking, isn't it? But where there's no refreshment handy we must bide till another time."

Then he slipped a shilling into Cook's rough hand, and started on the road to Mountsorrel, with a brisk step, as if he had a pleasing piece of intelligence to communicate to the Baronet, for which he was sure to be well rewarded.

CHAPTER XII.

The sun was shining gloriously, and the waves seemed to laugh as they threw themselves on the rocky beach, sending their silver spray up far into the air. Drawn up under the shelter of a pine was a small invalid carriage, very exquisitely fashioned, with burnished silver furnishings, and costly rugs heaped one upon the other lay inside. The white pony, whose proud office it was to draw Lord Wildgrave's self about the country lanes and over the breezy moors, was tethered at a little distance to a wooden post, and was feeding contentedly on a patch of short grass which grew close to the edge of the beach. Far away, a white sail gleamed in the run, which

showed the spot where the *Dabchick* was gaily dancing over the waves, with the Hon. Wilfred Romer on board.

Treherne was busy writing, or making calculations, in the comfortable den which he had arranged for himself in the lonely tower. He had seen the boy arrive down below with his footman, and noticing that they started without a sailor to take care of them, wondered why Lord Wildgrave, who was reputed to be so devoted a father, allowed such a dangerous proceeding. But the boy passed out of his thoughts, and he forgot all about the outside world in the interest of his work. Ralph Trevanion seemed to have become a different person since his assumption of the name of Treherne. He had risen above the sentimentality of youth, and resolutely quenched all longings after what was now forbidden fruit. All his energies he threw into his work, and thereby acquired a wonderful influence over his men. Already they had begun to know that if Mr. Treherne ordered a thing it had to be done, and that failure to obey would only earn for the man who disobeyed a prompt discharge.

And yet, though he was stern, there was not a man amongst them who did not know that he had a very kind heart. When an accident happened to little Jack Brown Treherne had him carried into the Tower, and lavished as much care on him as if he had been his brother.

This made a great impression on the miners whose rough hearts were easily touched by a small act of kindness; and soon they became so devoted to him, that anyone who dared to say a word against the manager, was likely to repent of it with a broken nose and a damaged eye.

He was always called the manager by the men, though Colonel Gordon was supposed to be what the Americans term "Head Boss." Certainly, the elder always referred to the younger when any important point was to be decided, and it was the latter's opinion that was sure to carry the day. The two pulled together perfectly, for the affection each felt for the other was so strong that it could bear a hard test without failing.

Presently a gust of wind from the open window scattered Treherne's papers right and left. He rose up impatiently to pick them up; but as he looked out across the now angry sea he saw a sight that made him forget everything but a boy's peril.

The *Dabchick* was evidently trying to run into shore, but the man who was guiding her had equally evidently no idea how to manage a boat, and it was in danger of capsizing every moment.

Treherne dashed down the stairs, and without an instant's loss of time ran his own boat into the sea, and jumping into it, rowed with all his might and main towards the boat, whose large sail was flapping ominously. The beauty of the afternoon had entirely disappeared, and the sea was dark and gloomy under the frowning skies.

There was no one to watch that tiny speck bobbing up and down apparently at the will of the waves, as Treherne strained every nerve to reach the *Dabchick* before it heeled over for the last time, though a father's hope might be killed the next moment, and more than one precious life was at stake.

Gradually, however, a host of men gathered on the beach, looking out to sea with anxious faces, and presently Gordon rode up, and in his cheery voice asked them what was the matter.

Then they told him that the manager was in that little cockle-shell of a boat, and young Romer was in that other, which looked as if it were under the management of a "loona-tio" land-lubber. The Colonel's face went as white as the sea-foam, but he was not the sort of man to stand there idle when there was something he could do to save a friend.

He put his horse at the steep hill, and the thoroughbred carried him safely to the top. As soon as he gained tolerably level ground

he went at a headlong gallop over the purple heather towards the coastguard station. He knew that they would be most willing to help; but the doubt was if there would be sufficient men on the spot to man the long-boat.

The crowd, meanwhile, down at Broadbent had been increased by numbers of the miners, who threw down their tools and ran down to the shore as soon as the news spread that the manager was in danger.

There was a little group gathered on a knoll, consisting of Lord Wildgrave, who had ridden down to the cove on purpose to see after his boy, and was nearly mad when his worst fears were confirmed by the sight of the empty carriage and the white pony feeding quietly on its patch of dry grass; Sir Thomas Dacre, who had driven over to see how the mine, which was beginning to be the talk of the neighbourhood, was progressing, and had brought his wife with him, and the Rev. Paul Verreker, Rector of Stanpoole, whose refined, intellectual face was always to be seen when any of his flock were in trouble.

Every eye was fixed on the flattering sail and the small dark speck which was trying so hard to reach it; and more than one face told of an anxiety too great for words.

The Viscount was a strongly built man, with a straight nose and a fiery eye, and coal-black hair. His lips were sternly-set, his brows drawn together as he stood with folded arms, the impersonation of manly pride and strength, whilst within his breast his heart was nearly breaking.

His rank and power, his lands which stretched far and wide over the purple moorland, with many a silver trout-stream under the jetty, cool shadow of the pines, many a fern-clad glade where the red deer had their home, even his wife, whom he loved as almost all Englishmen worthy of the name love the partner of their joys and sorrows; Hilda, his only daughter, who, with her lovely face and faultless health was worthy to be the idol of any father's heart—all these were as nothing to him compared to the sickly boy who seemed as if he would never live long enough to repay one tithe of the tenderness which was lavished on him; and yet there he stood, strong in his magnificent self-control, but so weak in everything else.

A stranger was using his utmost strength, and risking his life, to save Wilfred Romer; but the father could do nothing for him, except send a prayer to Heaven on the wings of a dying hope, and wait.

Oh, to wait! How maddening it was when that small rowing boat seemed to be lost for ever in the trough of the sea for one long minute, then tossed on the crest of a wave.

It was gaining on the *Dabchick*, when the latter suddenly veered round, as if on purpose to elude pursuit.

"The man's a fool!" cried Sir Thomas, who felt so infinitely less than those about him, and so could naturally talk the more.

"Look here, Gordon (to the Colonel, who had just returned, and stood by his panting steed without a word), the fellow missed the most splendid chance of bringing the two boats together. In another moment your friend would have managed it, when over went the sail, and they were scudding away on a wrong tack. Cydilla, you've better eyes than I have. Where's the small boat? I can't see it at all. I believe it's gone down!"

"It's there, close by," said his wife, hoarsely, with her hands pressed tightly together, her face drawn and haggard.

No one wondered at her emotion, for it was so natural for a lady to be agitated when the only son of a friend and near neighbour was in danger.

The Colonel was the only one of the group whose whole interest was supposed to be centred on Treherne, and the other who felt as much as, or more than he, had to hide it in the depths of her heart.

Suddenly a cheer broke from the miners, and rang out above the howling of the wind

and the roar of the breakers. Treherne was in the *Dabehick*, and if Wilfrid Romer could be saved by strength and skill he was the man to do it!

The slim boat looked like a sea-gull gliding swiftly along over the stormy sea, so skillfully steered that the wind which had been nearly its destroyer was now made its servant, and helped it onwards towards home and safety. Breathlessly they watched it now, and Cyrilla unconsciously drew nearer to the Colonel as if attracted by that link of unacknowledged sympathy, and Lord Wildgrave wiped the moisture from his forehead, and cleared his throat, whilst Sir Thomas called out,—

"Very pluckily done—Jove! there's some of the right stuff in that friend of yours, Gordon. I'll tell him what I think of him when I come across him."

The Colonel said nothing, but there was a look in his eyes as if he did not over-value the Baronet's praise.

Nearer and nearer came the *Dabehick*. She was close to her moorings, but the other boat was careering wildly over the waves, and the only way to get young Romer to land was to run her straight for the beach.

"Beach her! Beach her!" shouted a hundred voices in one stentorian shout, but the cry was carried away by the wind, and drowned as easily as the noise of a penny whistle.

The men got ready for a rush. Verreker stood out from the rest, and just as the *Dabehick* rose on the last dangerous breaker, threw a rope, which was dexterously caught by Treherne.

Then the sail was furled with lightning speed, and the next moment the boat was partly flung by the waves, partly drawn by the men, on to the beach.

Lord Wildgrave rushed forward, and Treherne, with a smile on his handsome face, placed the boy in his father's arms.

"How can I thank you?" said the father brokenly.

"Take him there," said Treherne, pointing to the tower.

Then they all gathered round him and made a fuss over him, and the miners set up a cheer which echoed far and wide across the hill-side; and the Colonel said nothing, because of a lump in his throat and a tear on each cheek, and Lady Dacre stood apart, white and very still, her heart going up to heaven on a song of thanksgiving; whilst Sir Thomas pressed through the crowd, and stood face to face with the man whom he was hunting down by his paid spy.

Treherne gave his enemy one glance, then threw back his head with a gesture of splendid defiance, and his blue eyes flashed as if with forked lightning. But never a word he said, as he folded his arms on his breast.

"Shake hands, Mr. Treherne," began Sir Thomas in a tone of unusual eagerness, moved out of his customary stolidism, by an unselfish devotion, which it would have been impossible for him to emulate. "I want to thank you in the name of my native county for an instance of dauntless courage, such as no one could have surpassed."

"I have done nothing to deserve your thanks, Sir Thomas," said Treherne, with a quiver of scorn in his clear ringing tones, as he disdained to touch the hand which the baronet extended; "nothing, at least, to deserve a hand-shake from you."

And having said his say, he turned away, and pushing his way through the throng of miners, strode quickly up the hill to the Tower without one glance towards the spot where Lady Dacre was standing, her golden head uplifted, her sweet lips parted in breathless suspense.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MEETING.

"QUEEN fellow!" said Sir Thomas Dacre, with a short laugh, as he caught the Colonel's eye. "I don't suppose he meant to be uncivil, but it sounded uncommonly like it!"

"Treherne had only done his duty, and he didn't wish to be thanked for it—that's all. Nothing he hates so much as a fuss," said Gordon, hastily, intensely relieved to find that the baronet had not recognised Trevanion. "Shall I go and see after your carriage, Lady Dacre?"

Cyrilla started.

"Yes, please! But tell me first how Wilfred is. I—I could not go home till I knew!"

"Wonder you haven't been to see after him yourself, you are the only woman here, so you might have been of some service. I can't get up that hill because of my confounded knee, but there's nothing to prevent you!" said Sir Thomas, leaning heavily on his stick. "Just go and say something civil to Wildgrave!"

Nothing to prevent her! Would he have thought so if he had known to whom the Tower belonged? The colour rushed to her cheeks, but she did not move a step.

The Colonel thought she was tired, and volunteered to go and inquire for her; but the Baronet called out, irritably,—

"Nonsense! Cyrilla, go yourself!"

And with a look of stern resolution on her fair face, she went slowly up the steep pathway to the lonely tower.

Treherne was standing in the arched doorway, talking to Paul Verreker, his white head in striking contrast to the dark wood framework; but the very attitude in which he was leaning in unconscious grace against the door-post, was sufficient to remind Lady Dacre in a moment, of those sunny days which were gone for ever. Involuntarily, as soon as he caught sight of her, he drew back into the hall, whilst the Rector said, in a pleasant voice,—

"I don't think you have met before: Mr. Treherne, Lady Dacre."

Both bent their heads in silence, and who could guess the thoughts that were passing through their minds as those who had been lovers once were introduced to each other as two strangers?

(To be continued.)

CINDERELLA'S MARRIAGE.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

AT DAY.

If Bertie had seen his former valet at the moment when, flushed and triumphant, he was guided upstairs by his wife, he would hardly have recognized the quiet, inscrutable man who had brushed his clothes and attended to his wants for so many years.

And, indeed, as great a change had taken place in Little as in his wife. He had grown stout and bloated with drink, and his former quiet, unassuming manner was replaced by an insolent audacity that had always lain dormant in his nature, but which prudence had induced him to conceal.

He took off his hat as he entered the room, and found himself in Lady Christabel's presence; but the action bespoke a sort of mock respect, far more insolent than open rudeness would have been.

The Earl's daughter looked at him for a moment with a scorn that she made no effort to conceal, and bold as he was, his gaze sank under the seathing contempt of those magnificent blue eyes. He muttered a curse below his breath, and whispered to himself,—

"I'll be even with you yet, my lady!"

Christabel's heart was beating rapidly. She had determined to play a bold game, and his quickly averted eye encouraged her in the hope that it would succeed.

"May I ask," she said, in carefully measured tones, dashed at the same time with a species of negligent hauteur, "what you mean by endeavouring to effect an entrance into my friend's house in such an

outrageous manner? Nothing but consideration for your wife, who served me faithfully for over five years, would have induced me to overlook your presumption, and even now I only forgive it on condition that it shall never be repeated."

Little looked abashed. He had not counted on such a reception as this. He fancied that the power he held over his wife's former mistress would have reduced her to a state of tearful supplication, which would have enabled him to make his own terms. He would be the judge, she the humble petitioner—instead of this, the positions were reversed.

"A man has a right to look after his wife," he muttered, sulkily, "and Jeanette had been here quite long enough to do her business."

"Very well," said Lady Christabel, waving her hand with a gesture of dismissal, and growing stronger as she saw the effect she had produced. "Jeanette's business is over, and she is ready to accompany you home."

Little turned a swift look on his wife, but her eyes were lowered, and she refused to meet his gaze.

"Have you got the money?" he demanded, going up to her, and laying a heavy hand on her arm.

"No," answered Lady Christabel, clearly and distinctly, and without a shadow of hesitation in her voice, "she has not got the money, neither will she get it. I am not in a position to lend her the sum she says you require, and if I were, I am by no means certain that I should do so, considering the habits which she informs me you have contracted, and which would render your paying it back extremely unlikely."

"Pay it back!" repeated Little, in unforgotten astonishment, "I had no idea of paying it back!"

Lady Christabel laughed—a low, musical laugh that maddened Little.

"I am afraid I am not so generous as you thought me," she observed. "It is quite certain that, however rich I might be, I could not afford to give five hundred pounds to any one who might choose to ask me. You must have been mad to suppose such a thing possible."

"I didn't suppose you would give it to any one, my lady," he returned, significantly, "but I did suppose that you would know better than refuse me!"

"And why you more than other people? It is true my maid is your wife, but beyond that I recognize no obligation towards you."

She drew up her head haughtily, her fine nostrils quivered, her eyes flashed. Even Little was seized with an admiration for her beauty, which for the moment held him silent. But self-interest quickly reasserted itself. He was wise enough to see that if he lost this opportunity of gaining his end, his power over her would be virtually broken.

"Look here, my lady," he said, coming a step nearer to her—a movement which she resented by drawing back—"it's best to have no beating about the bush, because my time is limited, may be, and if my wife—curses her foolishness!—has not explained to you my intentions, why, it's time I did it myself. I want five hundred pounds—and five hundred pounds I will have!"

"Perhaps so," returned Lady Christabel, steadily, "but you will not have it from me!"

The firmness of her tone staggered him.

"Do you know what you are saying, my lady?" he asked, menacingly.

"Perfectly."

"And you mean it?"

"I do."

"You refuse to give me the money?"

"Most assuredly, I do. In point of fact," she added, with a half laugh; "as I have already explained to your wife, I have not more than five pounds to call my own at the present moment."

"You have that which is worth it," he muttered, glancing at her rings.

"That may be, but it makes no difference to the position."

He was silent for a little while, uncertain

what his next move should be. He had no desire to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs, but if those golden eggs were not for him, then what did it matter?

"It seems to me," he said, presently, "that five hundred pounds is not a large sum to pay for such a position as yours."

"That has nothing to do with the question, seeing that I can keep my position without paying five hundred pounds," she rejoined, equably.

"By Heaven, you are wrong!" he cried, fiercely. "Why should I keep your secret if I am not paid for it; why shouldn't I go to the nearest magistrate, and have you arrested on the charge of having murdered your aunt, Miss Carbonnell?"

The words were out now—not spoken in a low voice, but half shouted by the excited man, whom drink and passion had combined to render furious and regardless of consequences.

Lady Christabel put one slender hand on the mantelpiece to steady herself, and her eyes dilated in a slow gaze of horror, as they fixed themselves on the door.

Little followed her gaze, and then he saw on the threshold a tall slim man of about forty-eight or nine, faultlessly dressed in evening costume, with the regulation flower in his buttonhole, and a crush hat in his hand.

It was the Duke of Strathsaye.

One glance at his face told Christabel that he had overheard those last terrible words of Little's—overheard them and understood their purport.

The blood seemed to recede from her heart, a red mist swam before her eyes. For the space of ten seconds she felt a desperate desire to fly from the room—out into the night—anywhere to hide her shame and humiliation. Then her dominant passion, pride, came to her aid. She would make one more desperate effort to save herself, and if it failed—well, then she must give up, and confess herself beaten!

With the sinuous, snake-like grace that distinguished all her movements, she glided to the Duke's side and laid her hand on his arm.

"I am glad you have come," she said, "for I am in a difficult position, and you can help me out of it. This man"—indicating Little with a gesture of superb contempt—"is mad or drunk, I do not know which, and he has forced himself upon me in order to borrow five hundred pounds. Because I have refused to comply with his extraordinary application, he has chosen to use threats. But for the sake of his wife, who was formerly my maid, I should have sent for the police before, and given him into custody. Will you be good enough to speak to him?"

The Duke looked from the one to the other. Evidently he was a little bewildered. But faith in his *fiancée* finally overcame his doubts, and he turned to the ex-valet.

"You may thank Lady Christabel Kenmare's forbearance if you are not prosecuted for this abominable attempt to levy blackmail," he said, in his cold, clear, cutting tones. "For my part, if it were not for the unpleasantness of having a lady's name mixed up with police-court proceedings, I would have given you in charge immediately. As it is, I bid you leave the room, and never dare insult this lady with your presence again."

Little looked from the one to the other, evidently uncertain as to how he should steer his course. His wife put her hand through his arm, and pulled him towards the door.

"Come, James," she whispered, eagerly. "Let us go away. Lady Christabel will forgive."

The word was unfortunate; it roused Little's passions. With a muttered curse he shook off his wife's grasp.

"Forgive! will she?" he exclaimed, with a harsh laugh. "Forgive me for speaking the truth? I thank her for nothing; and as for going, I shall go when I please!"

The Duke rang the bell, which was answered almost immediately by a footman. The servants were all on the alert, for with an unerring instinct they had guessed that something was wrong.

"Fetch two constables," said his Grace, briefly; "I wish to give this man in charge."

The servant bowed and retired. Christabel put up her hand to hide her quivering lips. She had hardly intended matters should reach this crisis, but to interfere in the Duke's action now would be impossible.

Little himself was surprised, and for the moment sobered. He looked at Lady Christabel, who had turned round under pretence of taking up her handkerchief from the mantelpiece, but in reality to gain a moment's time to compose her features. Unfortunately for her, there was a mirror over the fireplace, and in this her pallid features were reflected. Little, as he saw them, took courage. At the last moment even, he felt sure she would interfere, and prevent the Duke from carrying out his intention.

With consummate insolence, he threw himself into an easy chair, and crossed his legs.

"All right, my lord duke!" he said, nonchalantly; "I don't fancy Lady Christabel Kenmare is such a fool as to let me be taken in charge, even when the constables do arrive."

The Duke did not deign to reply, and three minutes later the door was again opened, and two policemen entered, backed by a couple of the house servants.

"I desire you to take this man in custody, on a charge of attempting to extort money by threats," said the nobleman, in those clearly incisive tones that were as hard as adamant as cutting as steel, and as he spoke he held out his arm to his *fiancée*. "Come, Christabel; let me lead you away; this is no place for you while these people are here."

Without a word she took the proffered arm and advanced a few steps. Then she tried to speak, but the words would not come. Her tongue seemed glued to the roof of her mouth. She was absolutely paralysed with terror, but in spite of this, she still contrived to keep command over her features, which resembled some exquisitely-sculptured mask of marble.

One of the policemen advanced to the side of Little, and placed a heavy hand on his arm. "Come on, mate," he said, soothingly; "the quieter the better for you, you know."

With a gesture of fury, Little shook him off. "I won't come!" he shouted, in a perfect frenzy of passion. "I have spoken the truth, and I'll stick to it—ay, in spite of all the lords and ladies and dukes in England! I'll lower their pride! I'll show them that if a worm is trampled on it can turn and sting. Lady Christabel, I'll give you one more chance. Send these men away, and I'll hold my tongue."

Poor Lady Christabel! Her worst enemy must have pitied her at that awful moment, if he could have read the agony of shame she was enduring under her stately demeanour. She was absolutely frantic with uncertainty. If she spoke a word in Little's favour after all this it would be tantamount to confessing her guilt, and yet, on the other hand, if she allowed him to be taken into custody, he was quite capable of betraying her. What should she do?

A painter might have found inspiration for his brush if he could have seen the group at that moment. The stately, patrician Duke, with his golden-haired *fiancée* on his arm, the miserable wife, hiding her face with her hands, and giving vent now and again to a sob that it was absolutely beyond her power to control; the more than half intoxicated man, red with passion, and the two stolid policemen on either side of him. It was a dramatic scene—"almost as good as a play"—as one of the footmen afterwards remarked to an admiring audience, as he told the story of that evening's strange occurrences.

On what a slight hinge of destiny do the

most important events of our lives turn! Lady Christabel had resolved to choose the lesser of the two evils. She would not plead for Little in his presence, and in that of the policemen, but as soon as she got outside the door she would implore the Duke not to run the risk of such publicity as would be involved in the man's apprehension—she would beg that, for his wife's sake, he might be permitted to go free, and afterwards—well, the future must take care of itself now that events had thus precipitated themselves.

If she had spoken while she was yet in the room she might even then have saved herself, for Little watched her every movement with the keenest attention, but as the door closed behind her, he turned to the constable with a short laugh.

"Well! you may take me now. I see she thinks she can carry off matters with a high hand, but she'll find two can play at that game. If she's reckless, so am I. I'll prove every word I say, and before another night has passed over her head she and I will have changed places. It's all very fine to talk of taking me to the station, but I want instead to be taken to a magistrate, where I'll lay an information against Lady Christabel Kenmare. What if the world say—the world of fashion in which she moves," he laughed, grimly, "when it hears that her dainty ladyship is a *murderess*!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A STRANGE STORY.

BERTIE CARBONNELL, in his travels round the world, found himself strongly impressed with a fact that has impressed itself on many other men—namely, that flying from the scene of a sorrow does not mean forgetting it.

Yachting was exciting, and had always been a favourite amusement of his; pleasant it was, too, to linger in foreign places, amid strange sights and scenes, where never a word of English was spoken; but all the same, he could not enjoy these things with the same zest as formerly.

"Out of the day and night a joy has taken flight."

The remembrance of Lucinda haunted him like a vague regret. That short, sad life—that love which had given up all for his sake—surely the heart must have been hard that could have been unmoved by it!

Nevertheless, he did his best to shake off the gloom that oppressed him, and that seemed to interpose itself like a black veil between himself and the sunshine of existence. He tried to be bright, gay, *débonnaire* as he used to be, but the effort was a miserable failure.

His fits of gaiety were too wild to deceive his friend Verschoyle into the belief that they were spontaneous, and they were invariably followed by hours of despondency, when he would sit on deck, his head between his hands, oblivious of everything and everybody but his own miserable reflections.

Several times he thought of leaving the yacht, for, as he observed to Lord Verschoyle, he was anything but a desirable companion. Verschoyle, however, would not hear of being deserted in this fashion.

"You'll grow more cheerful in time, old fellow," he would say; "no matter what one's troubles may be they are bound to yield to that one great consoler—time."

Bertie shook his head despondently.

"You may be right, Verschoyle—I hope you are. But even time can't give me back my old self. I feel myself a different man to what I was twelve months ago."

"Pity," thought Verschoyle to himself, with the cynicism that the world had taught him, "pity his wife did not live longer, then, perhaps, he would have regretted her less."

About fifteen months after the friends started they found themselves back at Naples, and there Bertie was surprised one morning to

meet with no less a person than the Earl of Thornleigh.

A lady dressed in black and deeply veiled was hanging on his arm, and Bertie was struck by the grace of her figure, and something in the way her head was set on her shoulders, that seemed vaguely familiar to him.

Lord Thornleigh greeted him cordially, even affectionately, but he did not seem quite at ease, neither did he introduce his companion.

"I'll come and see you on board this evening, if I may," he said, and then he bade the two friends "good-bye!" for Verschoyle was with Bertie, and hastily departed.

"Now, who can that lady be, I wonder?" murmured Carboneil, in a puzzled tone, as he looked after the two figures, "and how comes it that Lord Thornleigh is here with her?"

Verschoyle laughed as he lighted another cigar.

"Looks fleshy, doesn't it?" he observed. "Perhaps the Earl has got married on the sly for fear of Lady Christabel refusing to have a stepmother."

"Perhaps so," assented Bertie, smiling; but the explanation did not satisfy him, nor did he fancy, from his knowledge of Lord Thornleigh's character, that it was a true one.

In the afternoon the Earl came on board the yacht, and Verschoyle, with a true instinct of delicacy, left Bertie alone with him.

The two had not met since Miss Carboneil's death, and there were many things to talk over. There was also a proposal that Bertie wished to make, but which required some tact in approaching.

"I have wanted to write to you," he said, "only I did not know where a letter would find you; so I resolved to wait until you returned to England again."

The Earl looked a little embarrassed.

"I don't suppose I shall return to England for some time," he observed. "A composition has been arrived at with my creditors, and my rents are being put by with a view of paying them in full, but it must be some years before that result is arrived at. As a matter of fact, I should not care to return to England at all if it were not for Christabel."

"Where is she now?" asked Bertie, as indifferently as he would have asked where his valet was.

"Staying with her friend, Lady Tareham, in Park Lane. She has been there ever since Miss Carboneil's death. It is rather sad that she has not a home of her own," he added, with a sigh, "but she won't consent to live abroad, so I am virtually helpless. However, I hope before long to hear the date is fixed for her marriage."

Lord Thornleigh, it may be mentioned, was at this time aware that there was some hope of his daughter's engagement with the Duke of Strathsays, but he was not aware that it was accomplished fact.

"I hope, if she does marry, it will be a rich man," observed Bertie. "A woman less fitted to battle with poverty I never saw."

"That is true. Oh, yes! Of course she must marry a rich man. By the way, Bertie," added the Earl, looking at him rather curiously, "you have entirely got over your former fancy for your cousin?"

"Entirely!" he returned, with an earnestness that left no doubt of his sincerity. Then he hastened to change the subject. "You do not ask me my reason for wishing to write to you."

"No," listlessly. "What was it?"

"I had a suggestion to make. As you are aware, I inherited all my Aunt Drusilla's money—not as her heir, but as the heir of my wife, to whom it was all left. Well, I feel that it would have been more just if the money had been divided in some way, so I want to offer you one-half—fifty thousand pounds—which will set you straight with your creditors, and enable you to return to England when you like."

"My dear boy!" exclaimed the Earl, in the utmost astonishment.

"Don't thank me!" said Bertie, deprecatingly. "Fifty thousand pounds will provide me with a good income all my life, and there is no one I specially care to benefit after my death."

"But this is nonsense. You are yet young, you will marry again and have sons!"

Bertie made a quick gesture of negation.

"I shall never marry!"

"You say that now, but in two years time—"

"I shall say the same thing," interrupted the young man, quietly. "Yes, Lord Thornleigh, my mind is quite made up on that point. I shall never marry; I shall never have a heir; therefore, you see, I am not performing an act of generosity in offering you this money. There is only one condition I attach to it, and that is that you cannot have it for six months—it will take that time to arrange matters—and meanwhile I beg you will say nothing about it to anyone."

It was not difficult to persuade the Earl to accept this condition, and although good taste and innate tact prevented him from loading the young man with thanks, Bertie was none the less assured of his gratitude.

"I will tell you now how I come to be at Naples," he said, presently. "I am here with my sister-in-law."

"Your sister-in-law?"

"Yes, my late brother's wife."

"But," said Bertie, mystified, "I never even knew that your brother was married."

"Nor did anyone else, save myself," returned the Earl, looking down. "I will explain matters to you, and then you will understand. As you are aware, my elder brother—my only brother, indeed, went away to India soon after I was married, and remained there for some years. While there he went up country, and by some means found himself at the Court of one of the native Princes, where he met the lady whom he afterwards married. She was, in reality, a European—her father being an English officer—but both her parents had been killed when she was an infant, and she had been adopted by the Maharajah, who had no children of her own, and who seems to have loved her like a daughter. Of course, she was quite unused to European ways, and was, by education, a Hindu."

I suppose it was for that reason that my brother concealed his marriage with her. Anyhow, he said nothing about it to his family, but seems to have got an English woman, named Marietta Wilson, to act as a sort of maid or governess to her, and to talk English with her, in order that when he presented her to us she might at least understand our language. Well, time went on, and a daughter was born to them; but after two or three years my brother quarrelled with the Maharajah, and shortly afterwards he was poisoned—no doubt by the Prince's orders. When he was dying, he, being perfectly aware of his condition, told his wife to have his body embalmed and take it with her to England, together with a letter that he wrote to me. This she promised to do; but it was with great difficulty that she contrived to leave the Court of this Eastern Prince, as he wished her to remain. Still, eventually, she set sail for England, bringing with her my poor brother's coffin, her child, and the English woman, of whom I have spoken, Marietta Wilson. The latter managed most of the business details for her, and it was at her suggestion that a passage was taken in a false name. Hardly had they arrived in England when a terrible thing happened. Marietta disappeared, taking with her the child, and leaving this poor widowed girl—for she was little more—stranded and helpless in a strange country.

Little wonder that she fell ill, and for days—for weeks even—hovered between life and death. Luckily, she had, in obedience to her husband's orders, carried the letter, on which was my name and address, about her person, and the captain of the vessel—who seems to have been a kindly man, and compassionate of her former condition, at once sent to me, and I came up to London in obedience to his summons. I found Elodie delicious, but the letter, together with what the captain told me, partly explained matters, and I had the poor girl taken to lodgings, where she was well looked after, and where she finally recovered. In the meantime I instituted a search for the missing Marietta and the child, but it was unsuccessful—they had both disappeared, without leaving a trace by which they might be discovered.

This was sad news with which to greet poor Elodie upon her recovery; but, as it turned out, it had no effect on her, for, when the fever left her all remembrance of her child left her too. Her brain had given way under the strain of her bereavements, and she was virtually insane.

The insanity took a strange form. All she wanted was to be with the body of her husband—to watch over it by night and day, and the doctor assured me that, compliance with this strange fancy was her one chance of recovery. Well, I thought the matter over very carefully, and I came to the conclusion that it would be useless to announce my brother's marriage, especially as I had no proofs of it beyond what he said in his letter, and so I simply contented myself with letting the world know that he was dead, and his coffin was deposited in the family vault.

On the following day, however, I had it secretly removed to some caves under the cliff at Thornleigh, which communicated with the Castle by a secret passage, and where it remained until a very short while ago, watched over by Elodie, whom I had also had removed to Thornleigh.

Only two persons knew my secret—an old friend of mine, who was a doctor, and his wife, who lived in a house belonging to me on the cliffs, and into their charge I gave my sister-in-law. They looked after her in the night time; but every morning she went down to the caves, and remained there nearly all day, keeping her sad watch by the side of her husband's coffin.

But her mind still remained clouded, and it was not until about six months ago that Dr. Farer wrote me word he had observed signs of dawning intelligence. I had a specialist sent down to see her, with the result that she eventually recovered her reason. The doctors all advised a sea voyage, and so I brought her to Naples, with the intention of taking her on to India later on."

The Earl paused and looked at his listener, who had heard the narration with increasing amazement.

"It is a strange story," he observed; "it sounds like a page out of some wild romance."

"Every word of it is true," said the Earl, emphatically; "but at the same time, it is not worth while raking up the whole matter, and causing a nine days' wonder by revealing it to the world now. If the child had been found it would have been different, but in all probability, she has been dead for years. Elodie herself has no wish that her story should be known, but she is passionately desirous of seeing India once more. She is in very delicate health, and it is possible that her native air may do her good. You wonder, no doubt, why, as I do not intend making her history public, I should have told it to you?"

This was put in the form of an interrogation, and Bertie nodded a grave assent.

"Well," said the Earl, with a good deal of feeling in his voice, "if anything happened to me, this poor creature would be left helpless, and at the mercy of the world. My health is good at present, but one never knows what is going to happen, and so I have thought for a long time that it was my duty to confide her history to some man whom I could trust, and who would look after her in case of my death. Amongst all my friends, you are the only one

which was my name and address, about her person, and the captain of the vessel—who seems to have been a kindly man, and compassionate of her former condition, at once sent to me, and I came up to London in obedience to his summons. I found Elodie delicious, but the letter, together with what the captain told me, partly explained matters, and I had the poor girl taken to lodgings, where she was well looked after, and where she finally recovered. In the meantime I instituted a search for the missing Marietta and the child, but it was unsuccessful—they had both disappeared, without leaving a trace by which they might be discovered.

This was sad news with which to greet poor Elodie upon her recovery; but, as it turned out, it had no effect on her, for, when the fever left her all remembrance of her child left her too. Her brain had given way under the strain of her bereavements, and she was virtually insane.

The insanity took a strange form. All she wanted was to be with the body of her husband—to watch over it by night and day, and the doctor assured me that, compliance with this strange fancy was her one chance of recovery. Well, I thought the matter over very carefully, and I came to the conclusion that it would be useless to announce my brother's marriage, especially as I had no proofs of it beyond what he said in his letter, and so I simply contented myself with letting the world know that he was dead, and his coffin was deposited in the family vault.

On the following day, however, I had it secretly removed to some caves under the cliff at Thornleigh, which communicated with the Castle by a secret passage, and where it remained until a very short while ago, watched over by Elodie, whom I had also had removed to Thornleigh.

Only two persons knew my secret—an old friend of mine, who was a doctor, and his wife, who lived in a house belonging to me on the cliffs, and into their charge I gave my sister-in-law. They looked after her in the night time; but every morning she went down to the caves, and remained there nearly all day, keeping her sad watch by the side of her husband's coffin.

But her mind still remained clouded, and it was not until about six months ago that Dr. Farer wrote me word he had observed signs of dawning intelligence. I had a specialist sent down to see her, with the result that she eventually recovered her reason. The doctors all advised a sea voyage, and so I brought her to Naples, with the intention of taking her on to India later on."

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"Well," said the Earl, with a good deal of feeling in his voice, "if anything happened to me, this poor creature would be left helpless, and at the mercy of the world. My health is good at present, but one never knows what is going to happen, and so I have thought for a long time that it was my duty to confide her history to some man whom I could trust, and who would look after her in case of my death. Amongst all my friends, you are the only one

of whom I dare ask this favour. Are you willing to accept the responsibility?"

Bertie thought for some time before he spoke. It was a responsibility, as the Earl said, and one might well hesitate before accepting it. Finally his chivalrous and generous instincts triumphed, and he held out his hand.

"Yes," he said, gravely, "I accept the charge, and I will fulfil it to the best of my ability."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ENGLISH MAIL.

The next day Bertie was introduced to the Dowager Countess of Thornleigh—for such in effect the Earl's sister-in-law was. He found her a quiet, graceful woman, possessing the remains of an almost marvellous beauty, and with a certain childlike innocence about her, that her strange life-story easily explained. She talked little, and her expression was one of intense sadness, mingled with an occasional bewilderment that seemed to say her intelligence was even yet struggling with the shadow that had darkened it.

Neither Carboneil nor Verschoyle were inclined to linger long at Naples—both felt the jar of European civilization after the wild, unconventional life they had been leading, and both moreover were anxious to pay a visit to a land of which, as yet, they knew nothing—Australia.

They landed there some five months later, and almost the first thing they did was to possess themselves of a batch of English newspapers that had come in during the day by the English mail.

The two friends were sitting together in a private room of one of the Melbourne hotels, both occupied in devouring home news, when Verschoyle was startled by an exclamation from Bertie, who had grown deadly pale, and from whose nerveless hand the paper had fallen to the floor.

"Bad news, old fellow?" asked the Viscount, sympathetically.

Bertie nodded without speaking, and buried his face in his hands, uttering at the same time a deep groan.

"Innocent—my poor Cinderella!" he muttered, below his breath; "and I drove you to your death, with my damnable doubts. I, who had vowed at the altar to love and protect you!"

In the newspaper his eye had at once been attracted by a paragraph in which appeared a name only too familiar to him. It was headed, "Grave charge against a lady well known in London society, Lady Christabel Kemmure, accused of murder."

Hardly understanding the full sense of what he read, Bertie skimmed the account of what followed, dimly comprehending that his old valet, James Little, had applied for a warrant against Lady Christabel Kemmure, on the charge of having caused the death of her aunt, Drucilla Carboneil, eighteen months ago. To substantiate what he alleged, he produced a written confession, that he said he had some time since extorted from his wife, Jeanette Little, who had been, at the time of the murder, lady's maid to Lady Christabel.

The confession was short and succinct, and told how, on the night of Miss Carboneil's death, Jeanette happened to be in the morning room, whither she had gone to get a novel, when she heard her mistress's step outside, and, not wishing to be seen, crouched down behind a screen near the window. Peeping from behind this screen, she saw Lady Christabel take a small phial from her pocket, and drop a small quantity of dark coloured liquid into a wineglass, which she afterwards filled with port wine.

Jeanette recognized the phial as containing laudanum, which she herself had procured from a chemist for Lady Christabel, who suffered from neuralgia, and who occasionally used the narcotic to soothe the pain.

Being rather curious as to her mistress's movements, Jeanette only waited until her ladyship had left the room, before following her upstairs, and she was just in time to see Lady Christabel give the glass, containing the drugged wine to Mrs. Carboneil, who was on the landing, and who drank it directly afterwards.

Jeanette went on to her mistress's room, and made preparations for her night toilette as usual, but when Lady Christabel came in, she abruptly dismissed the girl, telling her that she did not require her services until the morning.

The maid's sleeping apartment was at the end of the passage, and hither she retired, but instead of going to bed, she seated herself in an arm-chair, and leaving the door ajar began to read the novel she had abstracted from the morning room.

She admitted that she was also desirous to keep a watch on her mistress, for Lady Christabel's actions and demeanour had piqued her curiosity, and she felt pretty well convinced that something unusual was on the tapis, though, as it proved afterwards, her suspicions took an entirely wrong direction.

Between two and three o'clock she heard the faintest possible creaking of a door, but it was sufficient to tell her that some one was moving, so she blew out her light, and crept carefully into the passage—which was, of course, in darkness.

Then she saw at the other end of the corridor a glimpse of something white, passing just outside Miss Carboneil's door. After a minute's pause the door of the sick chamber was gently opened, and the something white passed inside—without, however, quite closing the door again.

At first Jeanette seems to have hesitated, but finally she plucked up courage, and advanced along the corridor till she reached Miss Carboneil's room, into which she could see through the chinks of the unfastened door.

There was a faint light burning in the room, just sufficient to enable the eavesdropper to distinguish the form of Lady Christabel bending over Mrs. Carboneil, who was asleep in her chair.

Apparently satisfied, she advanced to the side of the bed, and pushed her hand under the pillow, and it was at this moment that Jeanette heard a strange, incoherent sort of cry proceeding from the paralyzed woman. In a moment Lady Christabel had laid her hand over Miss Carboneil's mouth, and all was still.

At this juncture Jeanette herself uttered a little cry of horror, which Lady Christabel must have overheard, for she came outside very swiftly, so swiftly that the maid had not time to make her escape, and the two women confronted each other in the passage.

Neither spoke, but Christabel beckoned the girl into her bedroom, and then, before she could say anything, she had fallen down in a dead faint, from which she did not recover for nearly an hour.

Jeanette stayed with her for the rest of the night, and when morning came, and the news spread like wildfire through the household, that Miss Carboneil was dead, Lady Christabel was at first beside herself with dread.

"I did not intend to kill her," she assured her maid, when the latter drew from her in disgust. "I only wanted to get a document she had underneath her pillow, and I did not even succeed in doing that, for I was so frightened that I forgot everything in my desire to get away."

She implored Jeanette to keep her secret, and she girl promised not to betray her on condition that her silence was well paid.

Shortly afterwards she married Little, and by the sale of her jewels the Earl's daughter contrived to realise sufficient money to pay the passage of the newly-wedded pair to America, and also to give Jeanette a lump sum of five hundred pounds, on the express under-

standing that it should be the last money that should be demanded of her.

All this Bertie read, and as he read, a full comprehension came to him. He remembered his conversation with his cousin when they two were alone in the drawing-room, at Rodwell Grange, an evening or two before his aunt's death, how Christabel had asked him in what way the money would be divided, supposing Miss Carboneil died without a will, and how thoughtfully silent she had become when he told her that in such a case the law would give her half the money, and he himself would take the other half.

Then, the doctor had come, and declared his opinion that the paralyzed woman would never fully recover the possession of her faculties again, so that there was no chance of her being able to make another will if only the last could be destroyed.

Yes, Bertie understood it perfectly, saw with what care she had laid her plans, how artfully she had contrived to administer to Lucinda the drugged wine, and how nearly success had crowned her efforts. That she intended killing Miss Carboneil he did not believe, but in her agony of fear when the sick woman cried out, she had yielded to a momentary terror, and her pressure on her aunt's mouth had been longer and heavier than she intended. Then, afterwards, in order to divert all chance of suspicion from herself, she had tried to throw it on the unfortunate girl who stood in her way.

And Bertie, by accusing his wife, had driven her to despair and suicide.

The young man got up, and rushed from the room. He felt stifled, suffocated—as if to breathe were an impossibility; air was a necessity to him.

He returned in about an hour, and found Verschoyle still engaged in reading the newspapers. He looked up as Carboneil entered.

"Poor Lady Christabel!" he said, "I don't think, on the whole, Fate has used her very kindly. It was hard for one so young and beautiful to die."

Bertie stared at him in surprise.

"What do you mean?"

It was Verschoyle's turn to look surprised now.

"Did you not read the account of her death? I thought that was what upset you so."

Carboneil shook his head.

"I read an account of Little's confession, or rather, his wife's. It was that which upset me."

"Then," said Verschoyle, looking at him fixedly, "you believed in this story?"

"Certainly."

"I am afraid there could be no doubt, at least, judging from what followed. On the next morning, which should have been her wedding day, the poor girl was found lying on her bed, quite dead. She had taken a dose of morphia—whether by accident or design must be left to the imagination. The jury took a marvellous view of the case, and brought in a verdict of 'Death from misadventure.' Poor girl! I'm sorry for her."

Shocked as Bertie was, he was not surprised at the tragic sequel to his cousin's life. He could understand that the proud girl would prefer death rather than face the shame and publicity of a trial. But what an end to such a brilliant destiny!

"I think there must be a curse on my family, for nothing but misfortune pursues me!" he exclaimed, bitterly, and then he went out again, and did not come in until bedtime, spending the interval in roaming restlessly about the streets, unconscious where he was going, oblivious of his surroundings.

At Verschoyle's suggestion they left Melbourne the next day, and went up country, where they remained, exploring, for over a fortnight.

The change did Bertie good, altered the current of his thoughts, and gave him back his self-control; but still he was moody and silent, given to withdraw himself from Vers-



LITTLE THREW HIMSELF INTO AN EASY CHAIR. "ALL RIGHT, MY LORD DUKE!" HE SAID, NONCHALANTLY."

ebony's society, and indulging in fits of depression that he was powerless to control.

"Let us go to the theatre this evening," Verschoyle suggested one afternoon, "there is an opera company there, and they are going to play *Faust*. The *prima donna* is Madame Villari, and people say she is well worth hearing."

"All right!" Bertie answered, listlessly; and more with a view of amusing Verschoyle than gaining any pleasure for himself.

So they took tickets, and in the evening were seated in the lower part of the house, consulting the programme, on which the name of Madame Villari was printed in large letters—she, of course, was to be the *Marguerite*.

"By the way, who is Madame Villari?" asked Bertie. "I never heard of her before."

"That is surprising, for there has been a good deal of talk about her. She is a young Belgian, I believe, and is said to be very pretty, as well as an exceptionally good vocalist. She made her *début* in New York about twelve months ago, and from the first moment of her appearance was a success. I believe English managers have made her very flattering offers to appear in London, but she has refused them all. She seems to have no desire to sing in Europe."

Bertie was not specially interested in this account, nor the person who was its subject; but directly *Marguerite* appeared on the stage he was conscious of a quick revulsion of feeling, and he followed every movement of the *prima donna* with the most eager attention.

It was not only her beauty that fascinated him, though he was bound to acknowledge that she was undeniably lovely.

She was tall, *velte*, and slender. Her eyes were dark, and her complexion, although, of course, it was made up with a view of neutralising the ghastly effects of the footlights, seemed to be delicately fair.

She wore rather a heavy fringe of golden curls that nearly covered her brow, and her

hair hung down in two heavy golden plaits behind.

How like she was to Lucinda!

It is true she looked considerably older than his girl bride, and there was a maturity in her face and figure that Cinderella had lacked, but the carriage of the head was the same; the movements were the same, the little tricks of manner and gesture.

Bertie rubbed his eyes, and asked himself if he were dreaming. Then Madame Villari began to sing, and he grew even more startled, for her voice irresistibly recalled to him that evening at the Grange, when Lucinda astonished them all by the display of her vocal powers.

Not that the singing was the same. The *prima donna* had all the little vocal tricks of her profession—the shakes, trills, and roulades, and she certainly could hold her own with the most accomplished queen of song of the day.

Art had done her best for her, but still the voice itself was so like Lucinda's that, while listening to it, Bertie could almost cheat himself into the fancy that death had given back its victim, and his girl-bride stood before him.

"Why, what's the matter with you, man?" asked Verschoyle, chancing to glance round, and surprising the rapt expression on his companion's face. "You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"And so I think I have," muttered Bertie, wiping the clammy drops of moisture off his brow. "For Heaven's sake tell me who and what this Madame Villari is?"

Verschoyle looked profoundly astonished at the request.

"I have already told you. What more do you want to know?"

"Who her parents are—where she comes from—what her real name is?" was the incoherent reply.

"Ah, there I am at fault, for I know no

more of her antecedents than the newspapers have told me, and those I have given you."

"Has she a husband?"

"I suppose so; otherwise she would be *mademoiselle* instead of *madame*."

During this colloquy the *prima donna* had been off the stage, and Bertie made up his mind that he would only wait to see her in the second act before trying to make his way behind the scenes, and endeavouring to get an introduction to her.

What could, or would, come of the introduction he did not attempt to explain to himself; indeed, however much he had tried, it would have been utterly impossible for him to have analysed his own state of mind.

His brain seemed on fire, a host of impossible ideas crowded it; he would not stay to reason out the absurdity of his vision, he only felt an overmastering desire to see this woman, and set his wild doubts at rest for ever.

With this fever of unrest consuming him, it was difficult to sit still and control his features into a semblance of composure.

However, the hour of seeing Madame Villari early in the next act upheld him, and it was something more than a disappointment when, at the raising of the curtain, the manager came forward, and said that he deeply regretted to announce the sudden indisposition of Madame Villari, who was unable to continue the representation of "*Marguerite*," but whose place had been most kindly taken, at a moment's notice, by *Mademoiselle Blank*, on whose behalf he claimed the kindly forbearance of the audience, &c., &c.

(To be continued.)

THE South Australian Government have made an arrangement by which an engine-driver who runs his trains for two years without accident will receive a bonus of £10.



[MISS CHANDOS COULD ONLY GASP OUT THE WORD "FORGED!" EVERYTHING SEEMED TO GROW DARK BEFORE HER!]

NOVELETTE.]

MR. TEMPLETON'S DAUGHTER.

—30—

CHAPTER I.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD.

"A truly great man" said Miss Chandos, laying down the newspaper, and looking across the daintily arranged breakfast table at her sister opposite, "a man of whom England may be justly proud. Bless me, Dorothea, I don't believe you have heard a word of what I have been saying."

"Yes, indeed I have, Geneva," the younger sister replied in some confusion, for her thoughts had been wandering most reprehensibly during her sister's remarks anent Howard Templeton—perhaps the most celebrated man in the country just at that time. Miss Chandos was a keen politician, and loved to discuss the doings of the conclave at St. Stephen's, and to express her opinions pretty freely as to how the nation should be guided by the wise men there assembled. She prided herself on being rather a strong-minded woman, only she did not call it by that name; she liked to be thought just a little above the ordinary weaknesses of her sex, and regarded women who wept and gave outward vent to their feelings with supreme contempt. She had little sympathy with her sister's sentiments, and small feminine failings, and scolded her without stint when she screamed at a mouse or shuddered at a spider, as she was wont to do.

Miss Dorothea had lost the thread of her sister's discourse for some time on this bright summer morning, though she strove to look as if she had heard every word of it. She was content to know that the famous member of Parliament was a great man; without caring

much about him, and to take her cleverer sister's word for it, that the nation at large owed all its prosperity to his talent and wisdom. She was far more interested in the well-being of their household, and the payment of their pupil's quarterly bills, for the Misses Chandos kept a school.

It was a terrible fact; they did not call it a school; it was an "establishment," a sort of refined and superior home, very select, where young ladies of the highest distinction, when the sisters could get them, were persuaded to learn as much as they would of what was ladylike and genteel, and were trained in all the ways of polite society as the Misses Chandos remembered them; for in truth they were the tiniest bit behind the age, and just a little old-fashioned; refined gentlewomen though they were.

They were of good birth, and really distant connexions of the great family whose name they bore, and in their youth had lived in affluence and splendour. It was long ago now, so long that Miss Dorothea, her sister's junior by about four years, had only the faintest glimmer of recollection of a home with troops of servants and all that goes to make life pleasant.

The crash which ended it all, and made them fatherless and penniless at one blow, had come before she was old enough to understand what it meant, or why her mother was so sad, and her sister so white faced and weary looking. Life to her had always had struggles and trials in it; she knew that she and her sister had been educated at the expense of richer relatives, and that their mother had been established in a small school by the same people. She was too young to understand what the struggle had been to keep their home together, but the gentle mother, all unused to work and anxiety, had sunk under the burden and left them just as they were entering into womanhood. They were brave and resolute, and looked their

position in the face; the school was fairly established, and they resolved to carry it on.

All this was a long time ago now; a small legacy from an unexpected source had enabled them to make a fresh start; the small school in Surrey had been given up some years, and they had migrated to the other side of the Tweed, and purchased the good will of a select and high-class school, under the very shadow of the Eildon Hills.

Monk's Ford the house was called—no doubt to distinguish it from the stately Abbotsford, which was well in sight from the bottom of the garden which sloped down to the river, where there really was a ford, quite as easy and somewhat shorter than the one where the holy man came to grief at the hands of the mischievous White Lady. Miss Chandos had been wise when the opportunity offered for the purchase of the school.

"We will not attempt too much," she said to her more timid sister; "there are masters and teachers to be had for the paying, and you and I are behind the times in our attainments, Dorothea; we will take our places—I will be the principal and manager, and you—"

She hesitated a moment, and Miss Dorothea, who fancied that her faded looking water-colours and her bygone fancy work were the perfection of artistic taste, meekly suggested that the teaching of these arts might be her portion.

"Booh!" was the reply of Miss Chandos. "The girls we shall have at Monk's Ford will be able to teach you. For a hundred a year and extras parents will expect more than washed-out daubs of pictures and hideous bunches of flowers in impossible colours in worsted work. All those things must be put away," she added, as her sister's glance wandered fondly to the walls where specimens of her prowess had hung ever since they had set up school keeping together. "No one will send a child to a school where such acquisitions as those are part of the scheme. You

need not teach any more than myself, Dorothea. There must be someone to overlook the sewing and mending, and you do that beautifully, and there will be sick children sometimes, and I have a more motherly way with them than I have."

Miss Dorothea winced a little at her sister's straightforward way of putting things, and felt that she was being relegated to a position something akin to that of nurse and sewing maid, but she wisely said nothing, and things righted themselves.

If Miss Chandos asserted herself as principal at Monk's Ford, and as the servants said "let them know who was mistress," she was careful to uphold her sister's position as well as her own, and Miss Dorothea was as much a power in the school as her more important sister. Perhaps one secret of their success was their exclusiveness. Always courteous and kind to every one about them, they kept to themselves out of school hours, and their pretty little room looking out on to the rippling river was rarely invaded by any one from the rest of the house except by special permission and invitation. Here they could follow their likes—hence the discussion of the morning paper, and the eulogy pronounced by Miss Chandos on the great man of the hour.

Neither of the ladies had ever seen Howard Templeton, or indeed any member of Parliament, or, indeed, any member of the House of Commons; they were safe, sheltered from the busy world as if they had been in an island of the Pacific. It was one of the recommendations of the school that it was secluded, and more than one of the older pupils was a daughter who had proved herself unmanageable at home, and had been sent to the out of the way border village to be tamed and trained into something like a well-behaved young lady. The Misses Chandos were thought to be very successful in this kind of education; they were eminently judicious, and Monk's Ford was more a refined home than a strict school.

"A truly great man," Miss Chandos repeated; "a man with whom I should be proud to shake hands."

"Bless me!" ejaculated Miss Dorothea, wondering what was coming to her sister; she rarely indulged in panegyrics about anybody. "What has he been doing now?"

"Doing? What has he not been doing?" Miss Chandos said, and then she launched into praises of the eminent statesman, and from them into reminiscences of what she had heard of his life.

That it was a life with a story in it all England knew—a story with sorrow and woe for its foundation, but what it was no one was quite sure.

That the people's idol had been foolish, and let a woman wreck his happiness was universally believed. Some thirteen or fourteen years before the Misses Chandos were discussing him at their breakfast table, he had gone abroad in the interval of public business, and met his fate at some foreign hotel. The clear-headed statesman, the wise legislator, the man who was held up by all England as one of her best and greatest, gave himself, and his fame, to a woman not worthy to be the meanest servant in his household.

She was beautiful; everyone admitted that. She had the form of a Venus, and the face of an innocent angel, with an illiterate mind and a scheming, crafty brain. No one knew what Howard Templeton endured while his mistaken union lasted. There was a child, a little daughter—the world knew that much, and guessed that the pale grave man was passionately fond of his child. He attended to his public duties as before his marriage, but without the nerve and spirit that had characterized him before, and people shook their heads, and said that once more a woman had been a great man's ruin.

Another vacation came, and he went abroad with his wife and child, to come back this time alone. The woman for whom he had lost so much lay in the cemetery at Florence, and her child with her—at least Mr. Templeton said so. Asked where the infant was, he replied

"Dead!" and his pained accents and quivering lips told how much it cost him to speak of it.

Then he threw himself into politics once more with redoubled zeal, and for ten years now had been the idol of one party and the dread of the other. Perhaps a great secret of his success was the passionless way in which he acted and spoke—it was as if nothing in this world could move him any more.

"Really, Ginevra, you speak as if you knew him and were in love with him," Miss Dorothea said, when her sister had finished her rhapsody, and Miss Chandos looked up severely and rebuked her.

"Don't be coarse," she said, "you do put such disgusting constructions on very simple words sometimes."

Miss Chandos professed to have a great contempt for the weakness of people who fell in love; she was commonly reputed to know nothing about it, and never to have had a love affair in her life. There were certain moments, looked up in a drawer in her bedroom that could have told a different tale—rolls of a faded but bright girlhood when she had been wooed and won, but had given up her fate for the sake of her feeble mother and almost as feeble sister, who both depended on her strength of mind and good sense for help in their struggle with the world.

Miss Dorothea had had lovers in plenty—crushes and crushes, and all sorts of utterly impossible and ineligible creatures, as her sister declared, and had given Miss Chandos a good deal of trouble, but she should do something real, and compromise the dignity of the school. She had been fairly scared into old maidhood, had Miss Dorothea Chandos.

She apologized very humbly for her indiscreet words, and gave a little sigh; perhaps, in memory of her many admirers, all of whom Ginevra had so successfully routed. Then she looked out of the window on to the fresh green landscape, and thought her lines had fallen in very pleasant places after all.

A carriage was coming up the drive—a private one; at least it was not any vehicle with which she was acquainted. The coachman and footmen wore neat dark liveries, and the horses were good and well groomed. There was a quiet taste about the whole equipage that she felt was a distinction.

"A private carriage," she said to her sisters, and Miss Chandos looked up.

"It must be some mistake," she replied; "no one would come on any business at this unseemly time in the morning; the servants have been sent to fetch some one and have mistaken the house. Is there anyone in it?"

"Yes!"

"Gentlemen or lady?"

"Gentleman."

"Ah! Mr. Gosforth, I daresay. He is a little early, but I suppose some one has given him a lift."

Mr. Gosforth was the clergyman of the little Episcopal chapel which the young ladies attended in Melrose, and had been laid up from the effects of an accident for some time; he had only just resumed his duties as theological instructor to the young ladies of Monk's Ford.

"I don't think it is Mr. Gosforth," Miss Dorothea said, as the carriage stopped and the footman rang a loud peal at the door-bell.

"No, it isn't," as a gentleman got out and entered the house, "it is a stranger."

"He has chosen a curious time to come," Miss Chandos said. "Many ladies would be quite unprepared to receive any one at this time in the morning," and she glanced at her trim breakfast gown in the glass with some satisfaction. Slovenly morning habits were not permitted at Monk's Ford.

They heard a firm manly tread cross the hall as the visitor was shown into the drawing-room, a pleasant room, utterly unlike the generally conceived notion of the drawing-room at a school. Everything was in good taste, nothing jarred by undue contrast with the old world aspect of the place. It was a

thoroughly comfortable apartment, and the two mistresses of the house delighted in decorating and beautifying it with their own hands.

"I hope it is a pupil," Miss Dorothea said, "we are not full by any means."

"We do fluctuate," Miss Chandos said, with a little sigh, and if fluctuating meant decreasing in the number of pupils, they certainly did. They could have taken five more young ladies and then not have been inconveniently crowded.

"A gentleman, ma'am," said a neatly attired waiting maid, entering with a card on a salver. "His compliments, and he is very sorry to disturb you at such an hour, but his time is very precious, and his business is urgent, so he hopes you will excuse it."

"Say I will see him at once," Miss Chandos said, rising and taking the card, and then sitting down again in her armchair, and with a faint, unattractive, and almost unrecognizable name of her pet hero, the great statesman, "Howard Templeton!"

CHAPTER II.

A DREAM REALIZED.

Miss Chandos stood at the card, and then at the girl who had brought it, and felt very much as if she should faint, with the weight of the house's thick summer morning was bringing her. That the great statesman, the man who of all others she admired and revered at an humble distance should be in her house waiting to see her, and sending a polite message where he might have commanded, and she would have gladly obeyed.

It was almost too much for belief, almost too much to allow her to speak with calmness to the girl who was wondering not a little at the perturbation her mistress so openly displayed. Miss Chandos was usually as impassive as a statue, especially in business matters, and this visit was distinctly a business one, the gentleman had said so. The girl had but a vague idea of who Howard Templeton might be; politics were not much discussed in the kitchen at Monk's Ford, and one gentleman was pretty much like another as far as she was a judge.

"Say I will be there immediately, Susan," her mistress said, and the girl retired, telling her companions in the kitchen, that the verily believed the gentleman was "come a coming, Missie was that flattered when she saw his name!"

"It is to Miss Dorothea, then," said the cook, grandly. "No one would venture to come courting to her!"—her meaning Miss Chandos.

"Oh, won't there be ructions if it is!" said the housemaid, who had been many years in the service of the sisters, and had a lively recollection of the routing of the last one or two of Miss Dorothea's lovers; "she won't be allowed to have him, no fear!"

Meanwhile, Miss Chandos, with no little trepidation, had taken a survey of herself in the glass to make sure that there was not a pin out of place in her dainty morning toilet, which looked as fresh as heart could wish, and set off her comely features for the greatest advantage. She was inclined to a somewhat severe style of dress as became the mistress of a select school like Monk's Ford, and she wore her gray hair, banded down, upon her forehead in a rather bygone style, but which suited her features admirably.

Miss Dorothea, as being younger, and not having given up all her youthful aspirations and imaginings, loved to adorn herself with such floating fancy as her sister did not absolutely forbid. She liked loose draperies and pretty ribbons and soft lace and contrived to make herself a very attractive and presentable middle-aged lady. She was always all "ends," her sister was wont to declare with a little shiver, when she came down stairs, as she did sometimes, more than usually adorned;

but, it was only Dorothea, and people knew her and it did not matter much. The "ends" and soft draperies would have been out of place on her, but they suited her sister, and they made a capital contrast.

Mr. Templeton looked up with a rather amused smile on his face as the mistress of the house entered the drawing-room into which he had been shown. He had been contemplating a portrait of himself which was a sort of fetish in the heart of his admirer, and which occupied a prominent place amongst the ornaments of the room.

He came forward with easy grace and introduced himself with the air of a man accustomed to homage, and yet in such a fashion as set Miss Chandos at her ease in a moment.

"You are doing me too much honour, my dear madam," he said, with a careless glance towards the table, "but I can hardly congratulate you on the photograph which has come into your hands. I hope I never did look quite like that, though I suppose I must have done so, or the portrait would not exist. You must allow me to send you something better if you really wish to have such a thing."

Miss Chandos told her sister afterwards that she never knew what she replied to this gracious speech. It was, so urbane, so informal, almost joking as he smiled and looked at the photograph in its velvet frame.

It did not do him justice, it was older and harder looking, there were the same features, the same curling masses of hair, the same shaped and coloured eyes; but the portrait had the look of a man who thought deeply and felt keenly—a man worn with work and the responsibility of a great position. The original carried none of these in his face. It was certainly, as he said, a bad likeness, evidently taken at a time when he was fatigued and weighed down in some way.

"I don't feel flattered by it," he said, and a look that made him very like the picture for a moment, "neither do I think it good. I hope you will not, when we know each other better."

Miss Chandos was in such a flutter of delight at his graciousness and pleasant words that she could hardly believe her senses, and he recalled her scattered with a word of business.

"I am intending unwarrantably at this hour," he said, "but my time is pretty much occupied, which must be my excuse."

Miss Chandos said something, she hardly knew what, about the extreme value of his time to the country at large, and he smiled as if the notion amused him.

"The country could get along very well without me," he said, "in this pleasant place it is good to forget politics for a moment. Miss Chandos, will you do me a favour?"

His manner was curiously abrupt, it was often remarked upon, and Miss Chandos listened to him thought how often she had read in the papers of that very quality of his; his admirers went into raptures over it and called it characteristic, and so forth, his enemies and detractors dubbed it brutal and coarse, and all sorts of hard names.

It was neither. It was somewhat rugged and abrupt—the style of a man who had often to dispose of much and varied business in a very small space of time.

"A favour to you!" Miss Chandos almost gasped, "surely I will. What is it, Mr. Templeton?"

"First of all," he said, smiling again with a winning grace, which was almost as marked a characteristic of this as his brusqueness, "burn that horrible libel on me. I am not a handsome man, but I do not like to feel that my unknown friends are made to think me worse than I am. You shall have another portrait to replace this one if you will destroy it, or, better still, give it to me."

"I will give it to you, with pleasure," the gratified lady said. "I, that is, we, my sister and myself, bought it to have some me-

ments of the good you have done, Mr. Templeton."

"Ah, spare me," he said, laughing outright now, "spare me. We're public men, you know; let us come to business. I want some help at your hands."

"Anything that I can do, Mr. Templeton, I shall only be too happy to attempt," Miss Chandos said; "you have only to ask and—"

"Wait till I tell you what it is," he replied. "It is something more than taking a pupil for school terms. Will you undertake the charge of my daughter—the whole charge, I mean—for an indefinite time. I cannot tell when it may suit me to have her with me again, perhaps not for some years."

"Your daughter!"

Miss Chandos could not do more than gasp out the words. All that she had heard of the sorrow in Mr. Templeton's life, and the loss of his wife and daughter coming into her mind, "I did not know—"

"That I had such an appendage. No, I daresay not, very few people do. There are reasons," he continued, "reasons which I cannot speak of, hardly bear to think of, indeed, that make me reticent on the subject."

The handsome face quivered a little as he spoke, and Miss Chandos listened, full of ready sympathy.

You have heard something of the story of my life, I dare say," he said. "It is pretty much public property, and some of the reports which I have read have the merit of coming tolerably near the truth."

"I don't know that I have heard much," the lady said, gently. She had read every word there was to be found on the subject; but every version of the story of the great M.P.'s luckless marriage was to the same effect in one item—that his child as well as his wife was dead. "I understood you had lost your little girl," she said, quietly.

"So did every one else, and for reasons of my own I have allowed the notion to be believed," he said. "She is not dead, my little Clare. Sometimes I think it would have been better for her, poor little child, if she had died then. But that is neither here nor there, the fact of her existence remains. I want a home for her, will you give her one? There need be no trouble about terms, whatever you think fit."

Miss Chandos hardly knew how to express how very glad she should be to receive the daughter of so distinguished a man as Mr. Templeton.

It was a forerunner of future prosperity. The school would gain prestige and position by the fact of such a pupil having entered it.

Something of this she expressed to her visitor, but it was not to be. Mr. Templeton quietly, but firmly, negated any publicity being given to the fact that his daughter was to be an inmate of Monk's Ford.

"I cannot give you my reasons," he said, seeing the disappointment in the face of Miss Chandos. "They concern both the child and myself. I am anxious that for the present her existence shall be a secret. Hitherto she has been where she has not been known as my child. She is not quite aware of her identity or rather of mine even now. I should like as little said to her on the subject as possible. I must know what she is likely to grow up before I make up my mind how to treat her."

"Too much of her mother in her, perhaps," Miss Chandos thought to herself, but aloud she only said that she should be very happy to undertake the charge of Miss Templeton.

"Our terms are one hundred guineas," she said, taking a prospectus out of a letter-rack on the table, inclusive of everything except one or two special studies that we have to procure masters from a distance for. Of course, if your little daughter is to remain with us during the vacations?"

"With you, of course, either here or wherever you go yourselves. I want you to take her as if she were your own. Expense is no particular object. Shall we say double

your usual terms, with a suitable allowance for clothing and extras? You see I am asking for a mother for my child as well as a school-mistress, and no money will pay for the love and care that I am sure she will receive."

Two hundred a year! Miss Chandos felt quite faint with relief at the proposal. She would have undertaken the most refractory and tiresome child that could be sent her far less than her usual fees just now; for Monk's Ford was certainly on the decline, and here was a double fee coming for a child who would be no expense, and might be very little trouble.

"Is it a bargain?" Mr. Templeton asked, seeing that she paused, and fancying that perhaps she was hesitating. "One great reason for my selecting this place is its extreme seclusion; another the high recommendation of many friends."

"Some one has been flattering us," said Miss Chandos, in a flutter.

"I think not. I have heard nothing but good about Monk's Ford and its mistress; but I want you to keep the fact of my little girl's residence with you a secret from him in particular. It will not be for long, but I have special reasons."

"We will do anything you wish," Miss Chandos replied, eagerly; and Mr. Templeton rose.

"Can I bring her to day?" he asked. "It is imperative that she should leave her present quarters at once. I have reason to be much dissatisfied with her present school."

"Whenever you like," the lady said. "We can take her at once."

"I will bring her in a few hours, then," Mr. Templeton said, rising. "And when I have delivered her into your hands you will give me this libel on my face, will you not? You shall have a really good one in exchange for it."

"You shall have it on one condition," Miss Chandos said, waxing bold in her extreme delight and happiness.

"And that is?"

"That you favour me with your autograph, inscribe your name on it, and that will make it inexpressibly valuable to me."

Mr. Templeton laughed, and said his mind was relieved; he did not know what she might be going to ask. She should have the photograph and the autograph as soon as he reached London.

And then he bowed himself out, and was driven away; and Miss Chandos went back to her sister, hardly able to believe that it was not all a wild dream.

"Two hundred a year, Dorothea, and the nicest man you ever saw!" she said, somewhat incoherently; "and an allowance for clothing besides. It will just put us back where we were before last year."

"Last year" had been a very unlucky year with the two ladies. They had lost some very profitable pupils, and had not found others to supply their places.

"It will do the school a great deal of good," Miss Dorothea opined; and was disappointed and curious when her sister told her that the fact of Miss Templeton's residence in their house was to be kept a secret.

"That is partly the reason he offers us such high terms," she said. "But I am sure he will not allow us to be any losers by it. He will make it up to us in some way, besides this money, I am sure."

Miss Dorothea did not say anything, but she thought her wise elder sister had gone slightly mad on the subject of Mr. Templeton.

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW PUPIL.

No one had ever seen Miss Chandos in such a state of agitation and flutter as she appeared during the day of Mr. Templeton's visit.

Her lips were sealed about the pupil she expected by her promise to the young lady's

father, or she would have carried the story of her triumph to the Manse at the foot of the hill, where she was a welcome and honoured guest. Episcopalian though she was, and to her friend Mr. Gosforth, who did not put in an appearance that day at all at Monk's Ford, and to everybody with whom she was on visiting terms.

It was somewhat hard to be entrusted with the education of the daughter of the very greatest man in the kingdom, in her eyes, and not be able to speak of it.

She had no idea what the girl would be like. She could guess her age approximately.

The story of the popular member's unhappy marriage was public property, and Miss Chandos had it all by heart.

Miss Templeton would be about twelve years of age—just an interesting age, she told herself, as she gave orders about the bedroom that was to be got ready, and ordered out fine linen and daintier adornments than usually fell to the lot of her pupils.

"A very interesting age, Dorothea," she said to her sister. "Just the period of a child's life when the ideas can be best formed, and the future for good or evil most distinctly marked out. It will be a delightful task, especially when we think whose child she is. We shall love her for her father's sake."

Miss Dorothea smiled, and said nothing; she assented meekly, as she always did to what her sister said, but she remembered only the very day before how Geneva had held forth anent a young lady just the age of this new pupil, and asserted that twelve years old was the most provoking and tiresome age that ever girls arrived at; that a girl of twelve had no brains, and seemed to have no sense of honour or honesty either; that she was sly and untidy and lazy, and a whole catalogue of evil qualities.

"Geneva isn't always quite just," she said to herself. "Poor little Parsons is not half as bad as she makes her out; but, then, she isn't a member of Parliament's daughter. Dear me, if I had made such a speech as she did just now about loving her for her father's sake, I wonder what she would have said to me? I should have had a lecture an hour long about coarseness and all sorts of dreadful things. Well, well, younger sisters can't do and say what their elders can, that's certain."

She was just as curious, if less demonstrative than her sister, and awaited the arrival of Mr. Templeton's daughter with much interest.

Miss Chandos decided that she was to be treated as a parlour boarder, though the great man had expressed no wishes on the subject. She felt that the child of so distinguished a man should not mix with the rest of her pupils, aristocratic though they were.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when the handsome equipage drove up to the door again, this time to be critically examined by all the inmates of the house who could find sufficient excuse for getting to the front windows.

News that some one out of the common was expected had leaked out, and the young ladies were all on the *qui vive* as well as their elders.

Miss Chandos received her guest at the door as became his distinction. She generally had new arrivals brought to her in the drawing-room, and was apt to impress parents rather forcibly with her extreme dignity.

She abased herself, so to speak, before Mr. Templeton, and welcomed him with effusion. He was every whit as urbane and polite as he had been in the morning.

"I have been rather a long time," he said, as the door closed upon them; "but I had business, and there was one or two things to be attended to. The child's outfit had not come down from town. I have had no one to help me in this matter, my dear madam, so I shall have to trouble you to see that everything is provided that is necessary."

Miss Chandos wondered a little—it was strange that a man like Mr. Templeton should

have no female friend to assist him in looking after his child—but he had admitted that there was a mystery, and she said to herself that it would clear up some time.

"This is your pupil," he said, indicating the little girl, who had not spoken nor moved since she was led into the room by Miss Chandos. "Clare, my dear, give Miss Chandos your hand."

The little girl thus bidden looked the lady straight in the face with a curious unchild-like look, as if she were reading her like a book! and held out her hand.

"How do you do?" she said, in a singularly unchildlike voice.

Miss Chandos drew her closer and kissed her, with an odd feeling that she did not like her much. She was hardly a pretty girl, but there was great power in the face and sufficient good looks to shadow forth beauty by-and-by. It was curious, but she was far more like the portrait that Mr. Templeton had condemned as a caricature, than like her father himself; there was the hardness and power in her childish features that were utterly wanting in his. Seated there in the pretty drawing-room at Monk's Ford, he looked a handsome *débonnaire* man of the world—not a bit of the grave statesman about him—and yet the portrait was good as a likeness too.

"You promised to give me this," Mr. Templeton said, seeing her glance from the child to the photograph.

"Yes, on conditions," she replied.

"They shall be faithfully fulfilled," he said, smiling. "Let me see, I am to send you the very best portrait that has ever been taken of me, with my autograph attached, is not that it?"

"Yes," Miss Chandos said, delighted; "I shall prize it, ah, I cannot tell you how I shall prize it, Mr. Templeton. Do you know it has been one of the dreams of my life to see you, to shake you by the hand, and now—"

"Like all dreams, the reality turns out a poor sham, is it not so, Miss Chandos?"

"No, indeed, it is an honour I shall never forget—one which I could never have hoped for; ladies are not supposed to be politicians, Mr. Templeton, and I daresay I am very ignorant, but no one can help being interested in the good you are doing daily."

Her speech was brought to an abrupt conclusion by the very curious expression that flitted over the face of the child, who was listening silently to what was going on. To Miss Chandos it looked like intense scorn; she certainly had no reverence for her father and his greatness; probably she knew nothing about it.

"Clare is hardly of your opinion, you see," he said. "Politics have very little meaning for her; she has never seen her father made the idol of the hour."

"She will understand and appreciate it some day," Miss Chandos said, stroking the little hand she held, which, to her surprise, was promptly drawn away; Miss Templeton was evidently not used to caresses.

"There is nothing more, I think!" Mr. Templeton presently said, "except to take your gift, Miss Chandos (I don't think I shall destroy it, but keep it as a memento of your pleasant house and courteous kindness), and to arrange with you for the first year of my little girl's stay with you—two hundred pounds. Will you have a cheque or notes? I brought both with me."

"I—I will have a cheque, if you please," Miss Chandos said, all in a flutter of delight and excitement.

As a rule she hated cheques, after the fashion of her sex, but the idea of taking a cheque to the bank with such a name on it as that of Howard Templeton put all her antipathy to flight.

"Certainly," said Mr. Templeton pulling out his pocket-book, but pausing with it in his hand. "I don't know," he said, "I think it would hardly be safe."

"Safe!" she echoed in surprise. "Anything from you would surely be safe."

"Quite," he said, "that was not my meaning. For you to cash a cheque of mine might draw attention to the fact I wish to conceal, of Clare's residence in your house. I do not say it would, but it might, and it would bring about complications which I cannot explain now, but which you shall thoroughly understand before long. I think I had better give you the sum in notes."

"As you please, perhaps it would be better," Miss Chandos said, and he laid a bundle of notes on the table before her and proceeded to count them. It almost took her breath away to see the unconcerned manner in which he let them flutter through his fingers, notes new and old, such a bundle of them.

Money was not too plentiful at Monk's Ford, and a bank note did not stay long in the possession of the Misses Chandos.

"I think that is right for the main business," Mr. Templeton said, handing quite a parcel of notes to Miss Chandos. "I have got them in small amounts on purpose; there is nothing higher than a twenty there; ladies sometimes find it difficult to change paper money."

"You are very considerate," Miss Chandos replied, counting the notes with trembling fingers. "It is difficult sometimes. They are quite right, thank you, Mr. Templeton."

"Yes, for the year's board and so forth, but Clare will want pocket-money, and more clothes, doubtless. You see my movements will be rather uncertain soon."

"Ah, yes! England is going to lose you; you are going abroad, I saw something about it in the paper."

"I think the papers know more of my business than I do myself," the great man said with a little curl of his handsome lip. "They are right this time, I am going abroad, as you say. I may not communicate with you for some time, therefore I had better give you a little more for whatever extras there may be. Say fifty pounds, will that do?"

"Oh, it is more than enough," Miss Chandos said, "but you will leave an address to be written to, if your little girl should be ill; we cannot always foresee."

"Clare is very healthy," Mr. Templeton replied. "I don't think she has ever been ill in her life. I will come and see her before very long; as for my address you know where a letter will always reach me."

He spoke as a man who is known all over the world, and Miss Chandos said no more; and again the queer expression, so like contempt, came over the child's face.

"I must go," Mr. Templeton said. "I have wasted too much time in this lovely district already. I leave my child with you in perfect confidence, Miss Chandos."

"I will do by her as if she were my own," was the warm reply, and she held out her hand, which was warmly shaken.

"Good-bye, Clare," Mr. Templeton said, holding out his hand to the child, who gave hers in return. She did not spring to her father's arms, or attempt to kiss him, only looked at him quietly and said,—

"Good-bye, papa," in a quiet voice, with no emotion in it whatever.

There was not a quiver in the dark little face, not a wistful look in the large expressive eyes, and before Miss Chandos had recovered from her amazement at her new pupil's demeanour, Mr. Templeton had bowed himself out of the room and was getting into his carriage at the door. He waved a good-bye to her and was gone, leaving her feeling very much as if the whole affair was some queer dream. There were the notes and the little girl to convince her to the contrary, and she led the child to her own sitting-room to introduce her to her sister.

Locked at without her hat, Clare Templeton was decidedly better looking; she had beautiful hair and eyes, and by no means irregular features, and her dark skin was clear, if brown; she would make a strangely attractive

woman by-and-bye. That odd look, so like the portrait, of which her father had taken possession, puzzled Miss Chandos; it was exactly where the picture did not resemble the original. She was curiously self-possessed for one so young; she did not appear to be more than twelve years old.

Miss Chandos asked her age, and she replied,—

"Papa says that I am twelve and a half. Introduce me to this lady, please, I have not seen her before."

There was so much of a grown-up woman in her, that Miss Chandos amazed out of all her notions of dignity, presented her sister as if the new pupil had been Mr. Templeton's wife instead of his daughter.

"Thank you," replied the child, gravely. "I am glad to know you, Miss Dorothea, I think we shall be friends."

"And don't you think we shall be friends too, my dear?" asked the elder sister astonished; she felt as if she had got a fairy changeling into her house instead of a child; there was such a curious air about the little creature, for Miss Templeton was *petite*—very small indeed for her age.

"I hope we shall," was the quiet reply. "But you are the mistress, you see."

"And your experiences of school mistresses have not been quite pleasant, is that it?"

"That is it," the new scholar replied. "I have been at one school before, and I should have run away in another week. There are things a person cannot bear."

"Oh, dear, I hope she won't try to run away from here," Miss Chandos thought to herself, beginning to understand why Mr. Templeton wanted a retired sort of school for his daughter. "I am afraid we shall have trouble with her."

"I should like my boxes taken up, please," said the child after a pause. "My things were got together rather in a hurry, and there may be a good many wanting."

And Miss Chandos was so taken aback by her coolness and self-possession that she rang the bell and gave the necessary orders without a word.

CHAPTER IV.

MISS CHANDOS IS PERPLEXED.

THERE was something curiously repellent in the manner of this odd child. Miss Chandos seemed as if she could not find words to talk to her, and she allowed her to go to her room and look after her belongings, feeling very much as if she had dreamed all that had passed, and should wake to find that Howard Templeton's visits and the charge he had placed in her hands were all a myth.

Miss Templeton looked on while her trunks were unrolled, after a furtive glance round the pretty room that had been arranged for her. It was impossible to tell from the look whether she approved of her quarters or not. She turned back to her boxes without a word of comment.

"I hardly know how the things are put in," she said. "They are not arranged in any way. They are all new, and we had to take a great deal for granted, as we were in a hurry."

"We!" echoed Miss Chandos, bewildered. "Yes, papa and I. Nothing that I had before would do, of course. He gave away all my old things that I had at—as the last school. He said I must be properly fitted to come here."

"And where was your last school, dear?" the governess asked hoping to gather something about her odd new pupil from the reply. "Abroad," was the curt reply. "Papa told me not to speak of it if I could help it; it was a mistake to send me there."

Her lips closed with a sort of snap, as if she declined to say any more, and Miss Chandos was too much taken aback to question her.

"I think you had better look over the

things," the child said, after the trunks had been emptied, and the bed and chairs were filled with handsome looking clothes. "I am almost sure there is something wanting, but I hardly know what."

A good deal was wanting. Miss Chandos called her sister, and they went over the new-comer's wardrobe together. Miss Dorothea looked up presently with a surprised exclamation.

"My dear, you have no stockings," she said, "not a single pair I can find, nor any handkerchiefs."

"Perhaps not," Miss Templeton said, coolly. "Papa was not used to shopping, you see. He gave orders that everything was to be of the best, but the people did not put in everything."

"We will soon make all that right," Miss Dorothea said, looking admiringly at the dainty toilettes that were spread about. Mr. Templeton evidently had an eye for colour and arrangement in a lady's dress, though he did forget stockings and such minor matters. Their new charge would do the school credit, at any rate as far as appearance went, if in nothing else.

"You can tell papa we will make all straight when you write to him," Miss Chandos said, hardly knowing how to begin to talk to this self-possessed little creature, who, as she expressed it afterwards,— "Shut her up with a snap every time she spoke."

"I am not going to write to him," was the quiet reply.

"My dear! Not write to your father?"

"No."

"But he will expect to hear how you like us—whether you are happy and so on."

"He will know all he wants to know; there will be no need of writing."

"But you will hear from him?"

"I don't expect to."

"But I shall; he is to write to me—he has promised to do so—you heard him—and send his photograph."

"Yes, I heard him," Miss Templeton replied, with the odd look in her face that was so like the portrait her father had taken away; "but he is always very busy."

"Yes, and just going abroad," Miss Chandos remarked. "I daresay he has very little leisure."

"Did he tell you he was going abroad?" the child asked.

"I don't know that he said so in as many words, but there is no need for private information about Mr. Templeton's doings, the newspapers chronicle them."

"Oh, yes, the newspapers, of course. Will you ring for the maid, please, to put all these things away, I am tired of them."

"My dear, our young ladies wait upon themselves, as far as the arrangement of their wardrobes is concerned," Miss Chandos said, feeling every minute that it was harder and harder to get on with this queer child. "Your things shall be arranged for you to-day, of course, after that—"

"Some of the maids must do it," Miss Templeton said, with an air of authority, and yet somehow, as the sisters both remarked, she did not seem like a child who had always had a maid.

"We will go down now," Miss Chandos said presently. "You will like to see the schoolroom, and be introduced to your school-fellows."

"I don't want to know any of them particularly. Am I to be in the schoolroom. Papa did not say so."

"Some part of the day, of course," Miss Chandos said, somewhat sharply. "It will be necessary; you will soon learn to like them all, I hope."

"It will not signify much; I shall see as little of them as possible; I shall not want them, and they will not care for me."

"Oh, yes, dear, they will. You will find them very lovable, sociable girls."

"Nobody likes me," was the only reply the child made to this remark, and Miss Chandos

turned her over to the teacher in charge of the schoolroom with a certain amount of dread, as to what might happen next.

"I don't believe she's a child at all," she said to herself, as she closed the door on the expectant group of girls. "She's more like a fairy changeling or a child-witch. I am afraid she will upset the schoolroom sadly."

She was agreeably disappointed to find that such was not the case; the new girl elected to behave most amiably to her schoolfellows and politely to the teachers, and the evening passed pleasantly enough.

Miss Templeton managed to let everybody know that she considered herself a person of importance, and she showed herself an adept in the art of finding out all that she wanted to know about other people without telling an atom more than she wanted to about herself.

Before bedtime she had managed to extract all sorts of information from almost all the girls, getting at their names and their histories in a curiously sharp fashion, but when they separated for the night the rest of them found that they knew nothing more about the new comer than that her name was Clare Templeton, and that she had been at school on the Continent before her arrival at Monk's Ford.

She had not given a hint as to whereabouts the school had been, not the slightest bit of information about her father, of whom the girls were burning to hear something. She parried all questions with wonderful skill, finally stopping their queries with a scornful remark to the effect that she did not know where they could all have come from if they regarded a member of Parliament as such a wonderful person.

The two heads of the establishment discussed her over their quiet supper, when the girls were all safe in bed, and the teachers enjoying their usual nightly liberty in their own part of the house.

"I shall never like her, never," Miss Chandos said, piteously. "She is the most disagreeable child I have ever received here; she will worry us to death, Dorothea!"

"Not quite so bad as that, I hope," Miss Dorothea said, gently. "She is strange to us as yet, she will improve in time."

"I am sure I hope she may," Miss Chandos replied, "there is room for it."

Things were not so bad as the good lady anticipated. Clare Templeton chose to make herself agreeable, and to learn her lessons with proper attention and zeal. She was very badly grounded in all elementary knowledge, and it seemed sometimes as if she had never been regularly taught.

In vain her teachers tried to find out where her education, such as it was, had been begun; they came to think that she had been forbidden to tell, and ceased asking her about it. There was a mystery about her; Mr. Templeton had said as much when he brought her to school, and it should be respected.

Miss Chandos did feel a little disappointed when the newspapers announced Mr. Templeton's departure for the continent and she had not received the promised photograph; she had been so looking forward to its arrival with the great man's autograph, and perhaps a letter as well.

She dropped a word or two about it only a few days after the arrival of the little girl at Monk's Ford in her presence, and she had curled her lip with the peculiar expression that was common to her, and remarked that her papa had to promise a great many things to all sorts of people, and it was not wonderful if some of them were overlooked.

"I hope he does not class me with all sorts of people, my dear," the lady replied, a little nettled at the speech.

"Oh, I didn't mean that, of course," Clare replied, "but, you know, in his position—"

"Of course, dear," Miss Chandos said, wondering what the curious smile on the young face meant; "he is always engaged, I know; still I hope he will not forget Monk's Ford, and his little girl."

"I am not afraid of being forgotten," Miss Templeton answered, and said no more on the subject.

"It looks as if he had forgotten me at any rate," Miss Chandos said to her sister when a week had gone by after Mr. Templeton's departure. "I wish I had not let him take that portrait, it was strangely like Clare."

"I hope he will be satisfied with Clare when he sees her," Miss Dorothea said, thoughtfully. "To my mind she is improved; she is more gentle and not so very abrupt and brusque as she used to be."

"She is not a lovable child," Miss Chandos remarked, with a little sigh. "There is always something about her that I cannot understand. She seems to have things on her mind, she is unchildlike. I should have liked a little more knowledge of her antecedents, but Mr. Templeton had evidently made up his mind to keep them to himself, and I believe the child has been tutored."

"No doubt she has. We shall be told all about her in good time," Miss Dorothea said. "No doubt Mr. Templeton's reasons are good."

"They are tantalising at any rate. Are you inclined for a walk this afternoon?"

"Yes. Where do you want me to go?"

"To Macdonald's and I think to Brown's also. They had better have some money each of them."

Miss Chandos was quite easy on the subject of money now. Clare Templeton had certainly brought her good luck, for her house was full of paying pupils, and a good deal of the two hundred pounds still remained untouched.

Some of it had been paid away. Mr. Gosforth, the clergyman, had been the first recipient of a note for ten pounds, and had listened with admiring wonder to the story of the great man's visit, and the introduction of his child to the school.

He was much interested in Clare, and saw a more lovable nature than appeared on the surface, and the child in her turn seemed to like him very much.

The two tradesmen whom Miss Chandos had named had also received some of Mr. Templeton's money; and in due time would have more; one was the grocer, the other the butcher, who served the Misses Chandos, and as there was no stint of food in their house, and the young ladies had the usual appetites of healthy school girls, their custom was not to be despised.

Miss Dorothea returned from her expedition into the town rather serious, and with a puzzled look on her pleasant face.

"Well," Miss Chandos said, looking up from her work as her sister entered, "have you attended to everything?"

"Yes, I think so; Cataret is writing to London to-night, and will match those things for you; but I didn't pay the money you gave me at either of the other places."

"Not pay it—why?"

"Neither of them would take it."

Miss Chandos stared at her sister as if she thought she had taken leave of her senses.

"Not take it!" she repeated in amazement.

"No."

"Why not?"

"They neither of them said; they are going to call on you; Brown said the money was of no consequence. I thought Macdonald's manner rather rude. He did not say much, but he declined the note; he said he would prefer its standing over for a little while."

"I never heard of such a thing, never," Miss Chandos said. "Tradesmen are generally so eager for their money. However, it does not signify; it is there for them when they want it. Who is that, I wonder?"

"Mr. Gosforth," Miss Dorothea replied.

"What can he want, I wonder?"

It was a little surprising, for Mr. Gosforth had not long left the school; his usual lesson having taken place that afternoon.

"Just in time for a late tea," Miss Chandos said, greeting him warmly as he entered.

"Dorothea has been to Melrose for me, and is only just come in. Sit down and tell us the news, if there is any."

Mr. Gosforth sat down, but he looked very uncomfortable, and seemed to have hardly a word to say.

"I have come about something very uncomfortable," he blurted out at length. "I am very sorry."

"Something uncomfortable!" Miss Chandos said. "What is it?"

"I hardly know—that ten pound note you gave me—"

"Yes; what of it?"

"There is something not quite right about it. I am afraid it is a forgery."

"A forgery?"

Miss Dorothea turned very white as she gasped out the word; its very utterance appeared to her fraught with some unknown danger.

"Yes; I have received a letter from the bank about it. You will know where you had it from, of course."

"Certainly we do," Miss Chandos said, recovering her scattered wits a little. "It was one of those I received from Mr. Templeton."

"Ah, then you had better communicate with him at once," Mr. Gosforth said, much relieved in his mind. "You will be no loser by it."

CHAPTER V.

MISS CHANDOS IS ENLIGHTENED.

It was very unpleasant of course; but equally of course there was some mistake, and a line to Mr. Templeton would put everything right. Miss Chandos sat down to write it, asking Mr. Gosforth to stay and see that she worded her letter properly. It was such an awful thing to have to write to a Member of Parliament about a forged bank note.

In her secret heart the good lady believed that Mr. Gosforth, and the bank, and everybody who had anything to do with it were wrong. She felt inclined to take the note back and exchange it for another. She had no others except the remainder of Mr. Templeton's payment; and it was not a very great remainder now. She had paid so much money away in getting rid of old debts.

"Will that do?" she asked, when she had finished a very apologetic and terrified little note, and handed it to the clergyman to read. "It is dreadful to have to hint at such a thing to him."

"You needn't have abused yourself quite so much," he said with a smile. "He is only a mortal like ourselves, and a very unpretending one, if all stories of him are true."

"Oh, that he is!" Miss Chandos said eagerly. "A perfect gentleman, not an atom of pride. What will he do? Will he send another note do you think, or a cheque, or perhaps come over. Ah! if he would only do that."

"I don't think Mr. Templeton will be so concerned over a matter of ten pounds as to break in upon his holiday and come home. He will order his secretary to see into the affair, and there will be an end of it. We shall not lose the money, be sure of that."

"I am sure of it," Miss Chandos said, with something of pride in her idol in her tone.

Mr. Gosforth smiled at her enthusiasm, but made no remark. He took her note to the post-office, quite content to wait for his money till the unpleasant little affair should be set right.

Miss Chandos felt very uncomfortable; but it was more on Mr. Templeton's account than her own. It was such a miserable matter for him to be troubled about; but there was more trouble in store for her. Worries seldom come singly, and that afternoon was to bring her plenty. She was dressing for dinner; it was a ceremony at Monk's Ford which was never omitted—when she was told that she was wanted.

"I cannot see any one now," she said some-

what sharply to the maid who summoned her, "you know that quite well!"

"Yes'm!" the girl replied. "I told them so, but they just said they would wait till you came down—their business wouldn't keep."

"Who are they?" asked the lady, angrily. "They must be very insolent people."

"They gave the names of Brown and Macdonald, ma'am," the girl said. She was new to Monk's Ford, and did not yet know all the tradespeople by sight. "They are not exactly gentlemen."

"No," Miss Chandos said with a little laugh, though she felt uncomfortable; she hardly knew why. "They are not gentlemen; go down and say that it is inconvenient for me to see them now. I will do so to-morrow morning."

The girl went, but returned in a minute or two with a message to the effect that the business of the two men was of a nature that would not wait, and that they must see Miss Chandos at once—they would wait her coming downstairs.

It was a very peremptory summons, and it made Miss Chandos feel rather uncomfortable. There was no reason why she should feel put about at the arrival of two of her tradespeople. They had been to the house before both of them; but she had been upset by the business of the ten pound note, and everything seemed to be going a little wrong.

"Show the persons into the morning-room," she said to the girl, "and say I will be down directly. Let them understand that I can only see them for a minute or two at this hour."

This notification was received with indifference by the visitors, one of whom went so far as to say in the servant's presence that Miss Chandos would have to suit her time to theirs till their business was finished.

They bowed gravely to her as she entered in all the bravery of her dinner attire, for she loved to be well-dressed, and some of Mr. Templeton's timely payment had gone to her dressers. The butcher, Mr. Macdonald was the first to speak.

"Sorry to come at an inconvenient time," he said, shortly, "but this is a matter of business, ma'am. Your sister, Miss Dorothea, called upon us to-day this morning."

"Yes, to make a further payment, and—"

"And we wouldn't take it. But so, Miss Chandos, we could not afford to! We are neither of us rich, and she offered notes again. A struggling tradesman can't afford to take notes from you, ma'am."

"I—I don't understand you," faltered the poor lady, though a horrible suspicion was upon her that she did. "I paid the notes as I received them myself, in payment of an account. You have seven refused any manner of payment from me before."

"Because they were all straight forward, if they were a little slow," the other man put in. "This is a different matter altogether, when a lady takes to issuing forged notes."

"Forged!"

Miss Chandos could only gasp out the word, everything seemed to grow dark before her eyes for a minute, but Mr. Macdonald brought her to herself by another terrible statement.

"Yes, ma'am, forged, and by all accounts you have been scattering them pretty well! We two agreed that we would come over here and give you a word of warning, for it seems to us that it is some fraud that has been practised upon you. We have known you a good time, you see, and we know that you have come through difficulties honourably and—"

"Thank you," said Miss Chandos with simple dignity. "I hardly know what it all means! Will you tell me exactly what it is, please?"

She clasped her hands very tightly in her lap that she might not betray how upset she was, and set herself to listen. The story was very brief. The principal dealer in the town had called upon Mr. Macdonald only the day before, and shown him a note which he had

received from the mistress of Monk's Ford which he had essayed to change and found a forgery. Upon this the butcher and grocer had also made an effort to get cash for the notes received by them on the same day and made a like discovery.

"And now, ma'am, we've come to you to know what it all means," Mr. Brown said, not uncivilly, though he rather misunderstood the deadly whiteness that came over the unfortunate lady's face. "It's an awkward business, you see. Mr. Cateret's in a taking he is, and talked of going to his lawyer at once, but we said we had better hear something about it first, and there's Miss Ramsay, the dress-maker, she's making fuss enough about her five pounds; it's the same with her, and she's let all the place know about it. She says that she'll go to a writer about it as soon as we go back and—"

"Please don't say any more for a minute," Miss Chandos said feebly. "She had hard work to keep herself from fainting, but there was no one to help her. She rose and rang the bell, and bade the girl tell Miss Dorothea and the teachers to go on with the dinner. The gentlemen's business was important, and she should be satisfied some little time."

"I don't know what to say," she said, after a little pause. "I can hardly expect you to believe it. I cannot believe it myself! All the notes paid away by me on the two days that these transactions cover were obtained from the same person in payment of an account. I received a large sum and devoted a large part of it to the payment of bills. I have already written to the gentleman who made the payment to me, and as soon as an answer could reach me I shall hear from him. I must beg that it may stand over till then."

"I don't mind waiting for a post or so," the butcher said, feeling really sorry for the poor lady, who showed no little bravery under the distressing circumstances. "But it will have to be settled somehow, and that soon."

"It shall be settled by the payment of the bills as soon as I can get an answer, but the gentleman is abroad."

"That kind of gentry are very fond of going abroad," the grocer remarked. "You've been swindled, ma'am, and that's about it, for I don't doubt your word for a minute."

Miss Chandos smiled in the midst of her misery and terror.

"Swindled!" she exclaimed, "you do not know the gentleman, or you would not say that. He is an incapable of doing any mean action as a selfish angel can be. He will know how the notes came into his possession, and will make it all straight."

"I hope so, ma'am, for your sake," the butcher remarked, and then they left her to go into her own room and lock the door, and go into hysterics, which she got out by herself, burying her face in the bedclothes, lest anyone should hear her.

"Poor old girl, it's rough on her," Mr. Brown remarked, as they went away; "she's been awfully swindled, there's a matter of a hundred pounds out in them notes."

Mr. MacDonald did not say much; he was ruminating on something besides his money.

"I wonder if we shall ever know who it is," he said, with a little laugh; "I should like to know who Miss Chandos thinks is innocent as a sinless angel."

Miss Chandos kept the secret of the motive of the visit of the two shepherds a secret even from her sister. She told Miss Dorothea that their business was unpleasant there was a mistake about the amount of their bills, and it had cost her a little; but she resolved to wait the reply to her note to Mr. Templeton before saying anything about it.

It came in due course, when the sisters were sitting at breakfast, a letter bearing the Vienna postmark. Miss Chandos opened it, stared at it for a moment, and then fell off her chair on to the carpet in a dead faint. Miss Dorothea shrieked and rang the bell wildly, and the servants came rushing in.

Miss Chandos was picked up and laid on the sofa, and Miss Dorothea took the letter that had caused the catastrophe. She did not faint like her sister, but she felt very much as if the world were turning upside down. This is what she read:—

"Hotel, Maximilian,
"Indwigerstrasse,
"Vienna, June 16th, 18—.

"MADAM,—I am directed by Mr. Templeton to inform you that there is some mistake; he presumes you have confounded him with some other person of the same name! He has not been in the neighbourhood of Abbotsford for more than ten years, he has no knowledge of your name or of the school you mention. He has no daughter, nor any young lady relative at school at all.—I am, madam, your obedient servant,

"CLARENCE POWER."

"Send for Mr. Gosforth," gasped Miss Dorothea, when she had read this terrible epistle; "beg him to come at once. Oh, what does it all mean? What is to be done?"

It was a long time before Miss Chandos could be brought round out of the terrible swoon. When strong-minded and strong-willed women do faint they do it as they do everything—with a will, and as if they meant it, and it was a fainting fit that was almost death. Mr. Gosforth came, and grasped the situation at once.

"You have been egregiously swindled," he said. "Perhaps the child herself knows something. Where is she?"

"What shall we do with her?" Miss Dorothea said, weeping. "I should like to turn her out of the house this minute."

"She may be innocent of any knowledge of harm," the clergyman said, gently. "Shall I question her for you?"

"Oh, please do!" the younger sister said. She seemed to be the stronger now; poor Miss Chandos was utterly prostrate.

"Not here; not in this room," the poor lady gasped from the sofa. "I could not bear the sight of her; indeed I could not."

Miss Dorothea and Mr. Gosforth adjourned to the drawing-room and summoned Clara Templeton.

She came into the room very pale, and with a cautious look in her eyes, as if she knew or guessed that some long-expected blow had fallen and stood before them silent but evidently defiant.

"We want to ask you a question or two," Mr. Gosforth said, gravely.

"Yes!" Miss Dorothea struck in, excitedly. "We want to know who and what you are. You are no daughter of Mr. Templeton's, we know that much. You have come here under false pretences! Your father is no member of Parliament; he is a swindler and—"

"Be a moment," the clergyman said, laying his hand on the arm of the first lady. "That is going a little too fast. Clara will tell us all she knows about herself, and who her father really is, and we shall know how to act. She is too young to have been a party to all that has evidently been done."

"She is not too young to know," Miss Dorothea said. "She has posed here as the daughter of a rich man; held her own in the school as the child of the most influential man in the kingdom."

"I have not," said the child, indignantly. "I have never said one word about my father; I have never told any of you a syllable about myself; it is you who have done the boasting; there was no need for me to do it."

"It was true; she had not. Miss Dorothea recalled how she had tried to get the child to talk of herself and failed, and how the other girls had often remarked that there was nothing to be got out of her."

"Whatever shall we do with her?" she said. "I never will never endure the sight of her again."

A sudden fear seemed suddenly to seize the little girl, and her eyes dilated.

"Take me away! Oh, take me away!" she said, clinging to Mr. Gosforth's arm, and he looked down pityingly at her upturned face.

"I think that will be the best plan," he said. "Let her come home with me for a day or two; my sister will take care of her."

CHAPTER VI. IN GREATER DARKNESS.

MR. GOSFORTH took the forlorn child to his home and the kind care of his sister, and it was well for her that he did so, for the next few weeks were fraught with misery and desolation to the poor ladies at Monk's Ford, all brought about by the advent of the daughter of the great man.

In two days from the visit of the tradesmen Miss Chandos found herself in a sea of difficulties out of which she could not extricate herself. Threats, reproaches, and accusations of dishonesty came from all quarters. Some of the unlucky notes had got into the hands of strangers, who knew nothing and cared less about the high moral characters of the sisters, and what was worse than all, the thing was made terribly public. In vain Miss Chandos protested, and offered repayment of all sums representing the forged notes; she was hardly believed, and the character of her school was gone. Pupil after pupil was removed, till, at the end of the autumn term, it became evident to the bewildered and sorrow-stricken ladies that their school had melted away. There would be nothing for it but for them to sell up and get away out of the neighbourhood, and try and begin again somewhere, where they would not be pointed at as the passers of forged notes.

And in all this time they had found out nothing about the odd child so wickedly thrust upon them, and in the midst of their troubles were more than thankful to Mr. Gosforth and his sister for offering her a home. They found her useful. The clergyman told them he was agreeably disappointed in her, and for the present at least she should remain in his house.

Miss Chandos declared she could not see her. She wished her no harm, but she never wanted to look upon her face again, and she would not allow her sister to say good-bye to the poor little wail. Uncharitable, perhaps, but natural under the circumstances, and Clara was left without so much as a good-bye.

The Misses Chandos were going back to London, and Mr. Gosforth intimated that he and his sister would see that the girl was not cast adrift. As a matter of fact, the worthy clergyman, and his sister too, had taken a great fancy to the child—partly from her very forlornness, and partly from the fact that they saw that the two ladies disliked her.

A curious suspicion that all was not quite right had haunted Mr. Gosforth's mind from the first, but he had no grounds for his suspicions, and said nothing about them.

For the first week or two they abstained from any questions. They wanted to see what the little girl really was like. There was a curious reticence and distrust about her that was not wonderful. They would let her learn to love them before they tried to win her confidence. There was no lack of love in her little heart, but she had never been with people who strove to call it out, and she attached herself with clinging fidelity to these kind friends who had sheltered and protected her.

One day, when the troubles at Monk's Ford were at their height, and the sale of the goods of the Misses Chandos was making a public scandal, Miss Gosforth found her weeping violently in a corner of the garret that was used as a lumber room.

"What is the matter, dear?" she asked. "I have been looking for you."

But Clara did not answer; only sobbed out that she was sorry—so sorry, and she wished she was dead.

It was some time before the cause of her grief was quite clear.

Miss Gosforth had a notion that she did not care for the Misses Chandos, and that she was callous about the wrong she had helped to do them.

It was not the case. Her little heart was wrung by the story of their humiliation and disgrace, and she would have done anything to help them if she could.

"Perhaps you may help, by helping them to find out who you are, and who it was that played them such a trick," Miss Gosforth suggested.

But Clare shook her head.

"I don't know anything," she said, sadly. "Not a single thing. I have been at school all my life; I have not learned much; but it has always been a school I was at from the very first. I don't think papa cared for me much. I don't think any one ever cared for me."

"Some one cares for you now," Miss Gosforth said, drawing the forlorn child close to her. "Suppose you try and tell me all about your life—where it has been spent, and so forth. Maybe we shall get at something to guide us, and your father—"

"Will he come back do you think?" asked Clare, in a voice of unmistakable terror and disgust.

"I cannot tell, dear. Will you not be glad to see him?"

"No."

The negative was prompt and uncompromising. It was very evident that Clare did not want to see her father again. Little by little she told her story; not much to tell when she had recounted all her experiences.

Her first recollections were of a place where there was a great square in the shadow of a church with a high tower, where there were beautiful chimneys, and dogs drew little carts in the street. Antwerp, Miss Gosforth guessed from the latter fact, and also a certain recollection of English being a good deal spoken round her as well as other languages.

Mixed up in the remembrance of this early period were a woman with black hair and eyes, and a foreign appearance, and her father. He was the one figure that never quite went out of the shifting scenes of her life. She remembered dimly a mean lodging and coarse fare in connection with this part of her life; then a blank; then the first school; a wretched place in a shabby quarter of Paris, where she learned little, and grew a great deal.

Then her father seemed to be better off, and removed her to a school at Dusseldorf, where she remained till she was taken away in a hurry and brought to Monk's Ford.

There had been money difficulties in connection with this last academy, and she had been spirited away, leaving all her clothes behind her.

It was a sorrowful and sordid story for a child to tell, but it was all she knew of her life herself. She had never been called Clare Templeton till she came to the Misses Chandos. She had been Clare Brandon to the best of her remembrance all her life. Mr. Gosforth drew his own conclusions from her narrative. He thought it extremely unlikely that the gentleman calling himself her father would ever reappear on the scene; who or what he was he could not guess. He would keep Clare from all harm, and make use of her in his house as long as his sister liked to have her, and then look out for some safe place of shelter for her, where she could be taught to earn her own living.

The bursting of the storm, and the discovery of the fraud that had been practised upon the Misses Chandos, seemed to make a different child of Clare, and to lift a load from her shoulders that had lain heavily upon her. She became a bright, pleasant girl, quiet and reserved with strangers, but loving to a degree to her benefactors, and a nimble little right hand to Miss Gosforth, who was something of an invalid, and wanted a handmaid at times.

Both brother and sister felt that they should find out some time who their *protégé* was. She was certainly absurdly like the portraits of

Mr. Templeton, that were to be purchased everywhere; but then she was equally like the far handsomer man who had called himself her father; so that was nothing.

Two things might lead to some enlightenment. One was a little locket, which from some reason or other her father had always enjoined her to keep; and the other an odd mark of a burn or scald on one of her arms. She could not recollect anything about it, so it must have been done in her infancy. The locket contained the portrait of a woman in one half, and a little infant in the other, which she believed were her mother and herself. She had no recollection of her mother; did not know whether she was dead or alive; but her father had always cursed and shown frightful temper whenever she had been alluded to; so she gathered that their married life had been unhappy. There was not much to go upon, but Mr. Gosforth said it might be a clue sometime, and took the locket into his own keeping.

"A lady wishes to see you, sir."

The young secretary of the great Mr. Templeton smiled a queer little smile as he said the words.

The idea of any lady coming in such a fashion and demanding to see his chief without the faintest shadow of an appointment was too amazing to be anything but a joke; and Mr. Templeton himself looked as if he were of the same mind.

"A lady!" he said, looking up in astonishment. "What lady?"

"This is her card, sir. Begs that you will see her for a moment. Cannot tell her business to anyone else."

"Ah, that's what they all say. And then, when they get in, it resolves itself into something anyone else could have done for them just as well. Ask her her business, Power. Tell her I cannot undertake to see anyone except by appointment."

"I did, sir."

"What did she say?"

"Said she was sure you would see her if you remembered who she was; but that she could not speak of her affairs to a stranger."

"Miss Chandos," Mr. Templeton read from the card he held. "Ah, yes, I do remember. Show her in, Power, and say that I shall be engaged for the next few minutes. I don't know what I can do, but I think I know what she has come about."

Power ushered in the lady, and withdrew; and Miss Chandos, pale and altered, and very different from the important mistress of Monk's Ford, found herself in the presence of the man she had so long adored as a political god.

Now she saw the original of the lamented photograph, and knew that it was a speaking likeness, and that the clever scoundrel who had palmed himself off upon her—though startlingly like—was quite another person.

Mr. Templeton greeted her graciously, and put her at her ease with the finished courtesy of a gentleman, and then asked what he could do for her.

"I hardly know," gasped poor Miss Chandos. "I thought perhaps you might be able to help us, my sister and myself, to get a living somehow, we are well-nigh destitute now."

"Indeed! I am sorry. Not through anything connected with the unpleasant affair you once wrote me about, I trust?"

"Ah, yes; it is all through that," the poor lady replied, and then she told her story; how she had paid away most of the money that had come to her in Mr. Templeton's name, and had brought upon herself not only the money troubles, but the obloquy of suspicion, and the ruin that comes of want of confidence. "We are looked upon as swindlers," she said, with tears. "No one will trust us with the education of their daughters; and we are not young, poor Dorothea and I, but we want work."

"It is a sad case," the great man said, kindly. "I had no idea it was more than the matter of a few pounds—ten, I think, was the sum named. I have so much to do and think about, that matters slip by me that I ought really to attend to. Will you tell me all about it, if you please—what the impudent scoundrel was like who posed as myself?"

"Very like you, Mr. Templeton," Miss Chandos; "so like that you might be brothers. But the child—the little girl—is more like you than him."

"Ah, the little girl," Mr. Templeton said. He was busy picking up a paper that had fallen to the ground, and the stooping doubtless made the colour die out of his face. "It was a vile fraud! I have no daughter. I had but one child, and she is dead. I thought all England knew that."

"I thought so, too; but you—he—the man, said there were reasons why you did not want the fact of her being alive published, and, in short, I was completely deceived."

"So it seems, and no doubt, cleverly, too. I assure you, my dear madam, if my darling were alive I should only be too proud to let all the world know the fact. It is the great grief of my life that I am childless."

There was a break in his voice as he spoke, and the keen eyes that were fixed upon her face seemed to grow dim for a moment, and his visitor felt that he was speaking the truth.

"Can you help us in any way?" she said, after a pause. "We cannot beg in our declining years, but there is much that we can do."

"I will try what I can do," Mr. Templeton said, and Miss Chandos knew that the little sentence meant a good deal from him.

He was a man who never promised anything he did not fulfil to the letter, and when he begged her address and told her she should hear from him she knew that somehow or other her sister and herself would be helped, and in a fashion that would not hurt the most sensitive feelings.

In less than a year the two ladies were prospering mightily in a boarding-house in the most fashionable part of Brighton. They were patronised in a quiet way by ladies and gentlemen of standing who wanted a refined and well-appointed home.

No one knew but themselves that the most popular man in England had almost made them a present of the place.

They had seen and signed all sorts of business documents, and were given to understand that it had been bought for an old song, and risen like a phoenix under their skillful management.

The purchase-money was a trifle to the great statesman, and he had been glad to help them, knowing that they had lost everything through being swindled in his name.

He frequently paid a visit to the pleasant boarding-house himself, passing a couple of idle days there now and then, and during one of these visits an event happened that nearly frightened his hostess out of her wits, and puzzled her not a little as well.

Miss Chandos was returning somewhat late one evening from a business errand, when she was suddenly accosted in a quiet street by a man—a wan, wild-looking creature, who shivered as he begged of her, though the night was hot, and looked altogether as if he were not long for this world.

She wondered vaguely who he was like and where she had seen his face before, and spoke to him gently.

She had scarcely uttered a word when he stared at her wildly, and fell down on the pavement at her feet with a half scream, half groan, that quickly brought a policeman to her side.

"Has he frightened you, ma'am?" the man asked, for the lady was ghastly pale. She had found out who it was that the man was like. It was the father of Clare Templeton, and the author of all the ruin that had fallen upon her!

CHAPTER VII.

ENLIGHTENED.

THE man was picked up and taken to the workhouse, and Miss Chandos went home to tell her story to her sister, and, by accident, to Mr. Templeton, who happened to be in the house at the time. He caught part of what she was saying, and begged to hear what had befallen her.

"You have no doubt that it was the same man?" he asked. "The very one who swindled you?"

"I am sure as I can be, he is so like you; there is the same peculiar likeness, only the face is wan and haggard now; I wish I had given him something, he looked in a terrible plight."

"Ah, he will be taken care of," Mr. Templeton said. "I will inquire in the morning, if you like."

"Oh, thank you, I don't know why I want to help him, but I do."

"Coals of fire," said the gentleman, with a smile; "a man has only to be wretched and broken down, and no matter how deeply he may have wronged and injured a woman, she will forgive and help him."

He turned abruptly away, and Miss Chandos looked after him wondering. She had never seen him so agitated before.

He told her the next morning before he went back to town that he had made inquiries, but they had resulted in nothing—the unfortunate tramp had died in the night. He did not tell her that he had gone and looked at the dead man's face and stood beside him with compressed lips for a brief period, and had then turned to the master of the workhouse and told him, to his amazement, who he was, and desired that the dead tramp might be buried with all decency and decorum. He was not to be rattled to his rest "over the stones" in a pauper hearse, but carried to his grave with fitting solemnity.

"I knew him," was all the explanation he gave of his generosity; but he did not tell Miss Chandos as much.

Five years later there died in that same workhouse an old woman, who had the laying out of dead bodies, who had consigned almost with her latest breath a parcel to the master, to send to Mr. Templeton. She told a queer story about it—she had found it on the dead tramp's body, and had concealed it, fancying there might be money inside of it. There was only a written paper, and she had concealed it with something very like terror, for even in the workhouse the name of the great man was something to conjure by. She would wait till she could get out and then she would take counsel with some one what she should do. She had an ignorant notion that she might be ordered for immediate execution if she meddled in any affairs of one so much above her.

Then there came a time when she did get out, and got drunk as well, and lost the packet, or fancied she did, and for a long time it remained in the house of a friend, whom she had gone to visit, who was as ignorant and as afraid of consequences as she was herself. She recovered it on her next holiday, which was after a long interval, and then she summoned up courage to ask a question or two about Mr. Templeton and where he was to be found.

It was after the parliamentary session, and she was assured that the gentleman in question would be sure to be out of England, and she put the packet away in her box and forgot all about it.

The master promised to forward it to him, and the old woman died and was buried like the tramp she had laid out.

"What ails you to-day, Power, you look quite radiant?"

Thus, Mr. Templeton to his young secretary—not quite such a boy as when he entered his service, but a sunny-looking young fellow, with his life before him still.

"I did not know I did, sir, it is the bright weather, perhaps," was the reply, though a hot flush rose to the handsome, young face, as the answer was given.

"You look as if your world was all sunshine."

"I think it is."

"Ah! with the sunshine of a woman's face. Take care, my boy, I should not like to see your life spoiled, and I have fancied the spoiling was coming. That portrait you hid the other morning."

"I really did not know I had it about me," the young man said, with a little laugh and a deeper blush, "till—"

"Till you took it out of your pocket and kissed it! All I say is take care. Who is the lady, may I ask so much?"

"Surely, Mr. Templeton, you may ask me anything you will, and I will answer."

"Who is she, then, and where did you meet her?"

"In Scotland, where you sent me last session; she lives at Melrose."

"And her friends?"

"She has none—no relations that is—she is an orphan."

"And you want to marry her straight out of hand, and set up housekeeping on nothing, is that it?"

"Not quite, but we do want to get married as soon as possible; there is no one to interfere on either side. I have no friends except you, sir, and she has none."

"And her name is—"

"Clare Brandon, this is her portrait, sir. I have been going to tell you this more than once, but I did not like to intrude my affairs on you."

"You might have trusted me. I should always advise you to the best of my ability for your father's sake if not for your own. He and I were boys together, and fast friends till chance separated us. So this is the lady. Why! who is she? Where did you get this?"

"Clare gave it to me, sir. It is a faithful likeness."

"She has a look of—pshaw! what nonsense! How oddly thoughts fly back sometimes. That young lady's face sent me back to a time when—well, when I was fool enough to think that a woman could be true and a man happy. Who is it she is like?"

"She is like you, sir."

Mr. Templeton laughed now, though there was a wonderful similarity between the fresh sweet face of the beautiful girl and his own set and serious features.

"I am flattered," he said. "The young lady is singularly handsome. We will discuss this matter another day, Power, I am in a hurry this morning. Where are the letters?"

"These from the house, sir, these from the club," the young secretary replied, laying two bundles on the table in front of his chief, who proceeded to open them as they came under his hand.

When he was about half through them he uttered a loud exclamation! A business-like blue envelope being opened, had revealed an extremely dirty and ancient looking parcel and a letter. Clarence Power looked up to see Mr. Templeton very pale, and evidently agitated.

"I must go northward at once," he said, "by to-night's mail. You must attend to—"

and he gave a rapid list of matters which he wished his secretary to see to.

All through the day he was abstracted and unlike himself, and Clarence Power helping him to arrange his work devoutly wished that he might go northward too.

Travelling on Mr. Templeton's business he had fallen in with Mr. Gosforth and his sister, who had also known his parents, Miss Gosforth having been a schoolfellow of his mother's.

At their house he had met Clare Brandon, who had been with them ever since the break-up at Monk's Ford, more like a loved and loving daughter than an adopted waif whom no one knew anything about.

Miss Gosforth had had a long and tedious illness, and declared that her life had been saved by the care and attention of her protégée.

Mr. Gosforth pronounced her invaluable in all ways in which a girl can make herself useful, and they had been only too glad to keep her instead of letting her go elsewhere as they at first proposed.

"There will be no need to seek any situation for her," Miss Gosforth said, when it had become all too evident that Clarence Power had lost his heart. "She might do worse, poor child."

"He might do a great deal worse," Mr. Gosforth replied. "I suppose he will speak to Mr. Templeton about it. I hope he will not feel prejudiced against her when he hears who she really is; he must have been very much annoyed over that miserable affair."

"I should think he has forgotten all about it by this time," his sister said; "great men have to put up with all sorts of swindles of that sort."

"It is odd that nothing has ever come to light about it," the clergyman said. "I suppose nothing ever will now."

It was not a little bewildering to the good brother and sister, not many months after this, to be summoned to their pretty little drawing-room to see a gentleman and to be greeted by a tall man in a travelling wrap, who announced himself as Mr. Templeton, and asked almost breathlessly if Miss Clare Brandon lived with them still?

"Yes," Miss Gosforth said, "should she call her?" but Mr. Templeton begged the favour of a few words first. He wanted to make sure that she was the same young lady who had been at the school of the Misses Chandos, who had been palmed off on them as his daughter. She was, Miss Gosforth said; she had been a member of their household ever since. And had she the mark of a burn on her arm? A scar of some sort, he was told, and a certain locket in her possession with two portraits in it.

"My brother has it," Miss Gosforth replied; "he thought he had better keep it for her in case it might lead to her identification some time; she has no idea who she is, poor child."

"She is my daughter, Miss Gosforth, really mine."

Miss Gosforth looked at her brother and then at the door; she was half inclined to run out of the room, firmly believing that their visitor was a little mad.

"I am in my right senses, I assure you," he said with a smile, divining her thought. "At least, I hope so. It is a curious story, but it is true. He told it to them as they sat there listening with a curious feeling that it was all a dream. The man who had swindled Miss Chandos was his brother, one who had been a drag and disgrace to him all through their career. When they were mere boys the younger had well nigh broken their father's heart by his conduct, and had finally run away from home to reappear when his brother had climbed to power and greatness, and he his evil genius at every turn. Even in his luckless marriage he had come between him and the wife he had so unhappily chosen. He had declared that the vain, frivolous woman had been his love first and had been tempted away from him by his brother's superior wealth and position. Whether this was true or not the elder had no means of knowing, but the younger conceived a scheme of what he called revenge, which he carried out with diabolical ingenuity for some time. His object was to get possession of the child, making her father believe her dead, and then bring her up in all the evil he could think of and make her a complete disgrace to every one belonging to her; then her father might have her back with such convincing proofs of her identity as could not be refuted and make what he could of her."

All this was set forth in the paper that he left behind him when his brother saw him only in death. How he had come to alter his

mind and let his scheme fall through no one would ever know now. There was proof enough that he had succeeded in abstracting the child and substituting another; the persons who had aided him were still alive and to be found, and Clara herself could tell a good deal.

Mr. Templeton took Clara's hands when Miss Gosforth at length fetched her down, and looked long and earnestly into her face. Then he lifted her sleeve and looked at the scar on her arm, he knew exactly where to find it.

"This is my work!" he said.

"Yours!" ejaculated Miss Gosforth, and he smiled sadly.

"Yes," he replied. "I was tossing her up in the courtyard of our house at Florence, and there was some plumbing work going on, at which I had been looking. One of the men running by with a red-hot iron tripped against me, and somehow, we never knew how, the little one's arm came right against the instrument and was burnt from the wrist to the elbow."

The locket was one Mr. Templeton had given to his wife, and she had put it round her child's neck in some superstitious freak that he well remembered; the portrait in it was that of Clara's mother.

"I suppose a Providence has watched over her," the father said after the emotion of the strange reunion had been a little got over, "and prevented my wretched brother from fulfilling his terrible purpose; from all I can gather he meant me to have found my child, when he chose that I should find her; amongst the most degraded of her sex. What part of his plan bringing her here to Scotland could have been, I cannot imagine."

The plan had been to rid himself of her altogether had they but known it. Something had suggested itself to him and his companions in crime, that promised a magnificent haul, and Clara was an embarrassment. The notes in his possession had to be got rid of somehow, and they offered a way of getting rid of the child as well. The fact of his having been accidentally addressed as his brother helped on the idea that he so successfully carried out.

What became of him during the time that every one seemed to have lost sight of him is of no consequence to our story.

When Mr. Templeton returned to his solitary London home he electrified his housekeeper by ordering a room to be prepared for his daughter, who would presently reside with him, but who was coming on a short visit at present with a lady friend.

"And be good enough not to mention the fact to Mr. Power," he added, leaving the good lady in a state of perturbation better imagined than described, it rather scared her to have daughters suddenly dropping from the clouds as it were, when she had had no previous idea of their existence.

"I want you at my house this evening, Power," Mr. Templeton said to his secretary some days after his return from the north. "I won't ask you to dinner, for the business I want you about might spoil your appetite, but look in in the evening, will you?"

"Certainly, sir," the young man replied, rather disappointed, for he had promised himself a treat at the theatre, and this appointment would interfere with it.

Mr. Templeton seldom wanted anything out of hours, but there were times when he did, and it appeared as if this were one of them. He dressed, thinking perhaps he might get part of the evening after all, and looked every inch a gentleman, when to his surprise he was shown upstairs into the seldom used drawing-room.

"The ladies are in the boudoir, I think," the servant who showed him in said. "Mr. Templeton will be here in a minute."

Ladies! what ladies, he had never seen any in that house, and he was beginning to fancy that he must be dreaming, when two figures that he knew quite well appeared in the doorway, and he gave himself a little pinch, for one of them was Clara Brandon and the other

Miss Gosforth. And there was Mr. Templeton standing beside them, ah, he must be dreaming, for he drew Clara gently forward, and said quietly,—

"I think you know my daughter, Mr. Power!"

"No, it isn't a dream, my boy," the great man said when the astonished greetings had come to an end. "Facts are stranger than fiction, and I have found my child."

The world said that it was hardly the match that Mr. Templeton's daughter ought to have made, if indeed she was his daughter, and the story that got about was not all a wild romance.

Eligible young men, with scantily-filled purses, declared that such a prize in the matrimonial lottery ought to have been exhibited, and not disposed of in that quiet way, and spiteful people turned up their noses and opined that there was something wrong, or the popular member's daughter would have been seen and heard of before this.

It was nobody's business, and when Miss Templeton was presented by the most exclusive and savagely proper duchess about the court, society was satisfied, and when the wedding came about there was quite a flutter amongst the pretty girls in the same set, as to who would be chosen for bridesmaids.

There was considerable wondering as to who the Rev. Charles Gosforth might be, who had been brought from no one knew where, to perform the ceremony, and no one knew the lady-like elderly woman, who seemed almost like the bride's mother, but it was nobody's business, and it served as a subject for gossip, if it did nothing else.

Clarence Power is in Parliament himself now, a clever rising man, though there are plenty of uncomfortable folks who will not give him any credit for talent, but say that he owes it all to the fact of his being the husband of Mr. Templeton's daughter.

(THE END.)

FACETIZE.

It is claimed that electricity can be applied to tanning. The old way of tanning a boy's hide will be kept up, however.

SONNY (reading his lesson): "Pa, what does n-o-u-r-i-s-h-m-e-n-t-e-pall?" Pappy (absorbed in his paper): "Gosh."

"Time and tide wait for no man," but when a woman is in the case, even time and tide must wait or go on without her.

"Laugh and the world laughs with you." Yes, very true; and slip up on a banana peel, and the world, or at least all within twenty yards of you, will laugh at you.

MARRIAGE NOT A FAILURE!—A countryman, on being charged by a rampaging bull, held his wife firmly in front, saying, "Stand steady, Maria, he can't toss both of us!"

"Now, Sammy, have you read the story of Joseph?" "Oh, yes, uncle." "Well, then, what wrong did they do when they sold their brother?" "They sold him too cheap."

A GENTLEMAN from the country says that he has no objection to a decent cottage, but that he has a strong antipathy to houses which are "Queen Anne in front and Mary Ann at the back."

At the Zoo, Mr. G. Brown: "Do you weally think, Miss Wose, that man is descended from a monkey like that?" Miss Rose: "Well, I think it is rather hard to say that; monkeys are so very intelligent."

TEACHER: "Do you know what wine is made of, Tommy?" Tommy: "Now, I don't know." "You ought to know. I saw you climbing up a grape arbor the other day when the owner of the place was away. What did you get?" "A licking."

Mr. SMITHERS (at a reception): "Her voice reminds me of our church bell." Mr. Bean: "Ah! has the true ring, you mean?" Mr. Smithers: "No; it's cracked."

MAMMER: "That dog of mine is a dandy. You ought to see him sometimes. Weally—aw—I believe he has more sense than I have. Old Crabtree: "And that ain't saying much either."

HOSTESS (to parting guest): "I trust you have enjoyed yourself, Mr. Smiley?" Mr. S. (with intense self-complacency): "Oh, you know, I am one of those people who never knew what it is to feel dull, Mrs. X—."

MAMRON: "The road to a man's heart, my dear, lies through his stomach; the moral of which is to learn to cook." Daughter: "In other words, mother, the way to learn to make men is by first learning to mash potatoes."

"SPEAKIN' of twins," said the old man Othumphins, "there was two boys raised in our neighbourhood that looked just alike till their dyin' day. Lem didn't have any teeth and his brother Dave did, but they looked precisely alike all the same. The only way you could tell 'em apart was to put your finger to Lem's mouth, and if he bit yer 'twas Dave."

TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENT.—She had done something naughty and her mother had sent her off to bed a little earlier than usual, and told her she would punish her for it in the morning. The child knelt down to say her prayers, and she put in this interpolation:—"Please God, won't you take mamma up to heaven, not for altogether, but just for to-morrow?"

"Yes, father," he said to old Mr. Hayseed, "I've graduated, and my education is complete. I s'pose I know about everything. Now I must choose a field where my abilities can be used to the best advantage. I want a large field where I will have plenty of room." "Son," replied the old man, "there is the ten-acre corn field, and you can have it all to yourself."

The cable says: "The Germans are hard at work digging French out of their language. One of the latest results of this purifying process can hardly be commended. The word *patronable* has to be cut out of the list of military terms, and in its place is to be substituted *truppenheimlichgepaßlergang*. If this is really to stay, the army will need an extra supply of ambulances."

A MAN once called upon a portrait painter and asked him to paint his father. "But where is your father?" asked he of the brush. "Oh, he died ten years ago!" "Then, how can I paint him?" asked the artist. "Why," was the reply, "I have just seen your portrait of Moses. Surely, if you can paint the portrait of a man who died thousands of years ago, you can more easily paint the portrait of my father, who has only been dead ten years?" Seeing the sort of man with whom he had to deal, the artist undertook the work. "When the picture was finished, the newly-blessed art patron was called in to see it. He gazed at it in silence for some time, his eyes filling with tears, and then softly and reverently said: "So that is my father? Ah, how he is changed."

"Down to the latest syllable of recorded time," exclaimed the orator at the centennial celebration, waxing fervent, "the people of America will honour his memory! Who is not proud to bear the name of George Washington and grateful to the parents who conferred it upon him? I wonder," he continued, looking around him with flashing eyes, "how many of George Washington's namesakes there are in this vast assembly. Will those whose privilege it is to bear that honoured name, please rise to their feet?" Sixty-seven men and boys rose up. "Will those of you who cannot tell a lie," said the editor of the village paper, notebook in hand, "please remain standing while I count?" And sixty-seven men and boys at once sat down.

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SOCIETY.

The Queen's two o'clock luncheon, over which family affairs are discussed, is Her Majesty's principal meal of the day.

The watch bracelet has made way for the purse bracelet, in which can be carried enough money for a church collection, and fare, or railway ticket.

Among the Queen's birthday presents this year was a bouquet of orchids of such rare and beautiful species that its value—although not a very large one—was something enormous. One authority declares that this bunch of flowers was placed at two thousand pounds!

A smelt brown or black hair can suspend a weight of four ounces without breaking, but a golden filament only one of two and a half.

Coincidences are the order of the day. At the Drawing Room held on May 29th by the Princess of Wales, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, the number of presentations was abnormally large—that is to say, 270. This happens to be the exact number of presentations of ladies of the aristocracy on the occasion of the first Drawing Room held by the Queen herself on her accession to the Throne in 1837, in the month of June.

Among the elder ladies, whose dresses were fearfully and wonderfully made, that of the Baroness Burdett-Goutte was by no means to be forgotten; it was quite a sentimental work of art—like blue brocade with posies of rosebuds tied with "true lovers' knots" in the pattern. The top was of cream satin of the same tint and material as the lining of the train, and a profusion of the Baroness's beautiful old lace draped both dress and train. Her diamonds, by the bye, fairly struck terror into the beholders, or perhaps it was the prodigious size and evident weight of the huge coronet, which fairly covered her venerable head, and the strings of brilliants that encircled her elderly throat—the effect was certainly striking!

I am sure that the Queen has recently been concerning herself with the arrangements of Royal funerals. In future the body of a defunct male member of the Royal family is to be placed in the coffin in an attire of quite different material to that worn by a deceased female, and married people are not to be treated the same as the unmarried. The Queen's solicitude extends even to the making of the coffin, and there are copious directions concerning them. Embalming is absolutely prohibited.

The King of Italy, who has just closed a memorable visit to the Emperor of Germany, is a slender dark man, with a cold, solemn face, who can be seen any fine Sunday afternoon driving in the Borghese Gardens, in Rome. He is a very popular monarch, and appears on all occasions unattended, without the slightest fear of or danger from assassination. He is forty-five years old, during fifteen of which he has sat on the throne of united Italy. He is personally brave, and devoted to horses and army life, and personally distinguished himself at the disastrous battle of Custoza. His manners are courteous and he makes a favourable impression upon all strangers who are admitted to his presence.

We can well believe that it requires some patience to listen courteously to the oft-told tale of welcome and loyalty, some strength to endure the constant strain of every faculty, some ingenuity to devise fitting addresses and replies; and nothing is more characteristic of the Prince of Wales than the trouble he takes to know what he is talking about. If he takes the chair at a meeting or festival in aid of some charitable institution, it is almost certain he has visited it—probably in a private and unofficial manner—a short time before, and knows pretty well the work done by it and the justice of its claims on the generosity of the public.

STATISTICS.

THERE are some six hundred thousand children attending our London elementary schools. PARIS has given the pretty order for over twenty-two millions of pounds of bacon to the Irish bacon curers.

Not one in a thousand realizes the fact that, next to England, little Holland is the greatest colonial power in the world. The Dutch colonies have an area of nearly 80,000 square miles, which includes some of the finest colonial possessions in the world.

Iron, the most abundant and most useful of all the metals, was neither known so early nor wrought so easily as gold, silver and copper. For its discovery we must have recourse to the nations of the East, among whom, indeed, almost all the arts and sciences first sprang up.

There was a time when French was the only cosmopolitan language; but that time is long passed. To-day the tongue of Shakespeare and Bacon, of Milton and Burke, of Whittier and Lowell is spoken by not far from 115,000,000 people. There is no considerable city of the civilised world where it is not heard. It has long been the language of colonisation and of commerce. It is already to a considerable extent, it is every day becoming to a greater extent, it must inevitably and speedily become to a prevailing extent, the language of diplomacy.

GEMS.

EDUCATION is not first or chiefly the mere learning of certain facts or principles; it is such a development and training of faculty as makes a man master of himself and his conditions.

ARMIES, though always the supporters and tools of absolute power, for the time being, are always the destroyers of it too, by frequently changing the hands in which they think proper to lodge it.

PEOPLE who have no occupation must worry. The human heart is like a millstone—if you put wheat under it, it grinds the wheat into flour; if you put no wheat, it grinds on, but then it is itself it wears away.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ONIONS.—One of the healthiest vegetables, if not the healthiest one grown, is the onion, yet, strange to say, few people use it as liberally as they should. Boiled onions used frequently in a family of children will ward off many of the diseases to which the little ones are subject. The principal objection to the promiscuous use of this vegetable is that the odour exhaled after eating is so offensive. A cup of strong coffee taken immediately after eating onions the breath may have a disagreeable odour; after this time it will be much sweeter than before.

BREADY BUTTER.—Half a pound of butter, half a pound of fine flour, a quarter of a pound of sifted sugar, four eggs, two ounces of well-cleaned and dried currants, one ounce of citron cut up small, and one ounce of sweet almonds blanched and cut fine, one teaspoonful of brandy, and one teaspoonful of baking powder in the flour. Beat the butter to a cream, lift in the sugar, then the flour. Beat the yolks of the eggs up very well, add the brandy, and mix in with the rest. Beat the whites to a froth, then add and beat all for five minutes. Drop into floured tins about the size of a big walnut. Bake at once in a fairly hot oven.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A TYPE-WRITER four inches square has been invented by a Londoner. It is said to do its work well, and it sells for two shillings and sixpence.

LEPROSY is increasing in Russia. During the last ten years forty-nine patients were treated in the St. Petersburg hospitals, half of whom were natives of the city. The Baltic provinces suffer most from the disease.

Quite the newest style of decoration shown is called Mosaicon. It has all the effect of mosaic, but is made of paper deftly rolled and arranged to take the form of flowers and conventional designs of the usual inland work type.

When Mr. Edison's infant daughter crows with delight when she screams, every sound that comes from her lips is registered on the phonograph. He means to treasure the record till she grows up, and then let loose her infant utterances. The good man thinks it will amuse her.

Two years ago a donkey died at Cromarty that was known to be at least 100 years old. It could be traced back to the year 1779, when, at an unknown age, it came into the hands of the then Ross of Cromarty, and it lived in the same family, " hale and hearty," until a kick from a horse ended its career.

BEAUTY shows, it appears, not quite a novelty. The *Intermédiaire des Chercheurs* describes one held at Paris in 1655. In remembrance of the oldest competition of the kind the prizes were golden apples. The first prize was, of course, awarded to the Queen of France, and the second was obtained with 1728 points by a Mlle. Semure. Most of the prizes were given to ladies from Normandy.

One often reads pathetic stories of pet birds that die simultaneously with, or shortly after, their child owners. It sounds pretty, but the simple prose of the matter often is that the owners infected the birds. Canaries and other songsters will catch scarlet fever, measles, diphtheria, or almost any other human disease, and if left in the sick-room they are almost sure to be infected. Pet cats and small dogs, too, are often sacrificed in the same way, and in their case there is also the risk that they will go out and become the unwitting instruments of disseminating disease.

APPROPOS of the statement in the papers that "a salute of twenty-one guns was fired in Windsor Park on the Queen's birthday," people figure to themselves a fine salvo of artillery from guns that have perhaps seen service, with bronzed soldiers around to do honour to the occasion. We fear it will rather spoil the illusion when they hear that twenty-one tiny cannons, each a foot long and weighing fifteen pounds apiece, are conveyed in a sack to the Long Walk soon after noon on these occasions. These "heavy ordnances" are duly fired off by a bombardier, in plain clothes, belonging to the Corporation of Windsor, for these little toy guns belong to the Municipality of the Royal Borough, and have "no connection with Her Majesty's army."

The death of Laura Bridgman, in her sixtieth year, removes from the world a figure which has been almost forgotten by the present generation, but which excited the liveliest interest forty years ago. Her life was one long series of triumphs over difficulties such as are, happily, rare indeed. In early infancy she was like other children. She saw the world with her baby eyes, and heard her mother's voice. But long before the childish mind could realise the meaning of what she saw and heard knowledge at both entrances was quite shut out. Eyes and ears were closed by fever and sealed up for ever. Blind and deaf, and therefore dumb, she lived on among her kin the most absolute life a human being can live, in the world but not of the world, and with only two senses instead of five, the sense of smell, and the sense of touch.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

—O—

PUEBLED.—"Reuter" is pronounced as if spelt "Roy-ter."

J. J. J.—The real name of Enin Pacha is Dr. Trilschner.

CONSTANT READER.—A shark turns on its side to secure its prey.

C. J.—A lady under age cannot marry without her parents' consent.

RAILWAY GUARD.—The word "Effel" is pronounced as if spelt "Eifel."

BOSS.—It is 6,160 miles from London to Bombay by the nearest sea route.

WANTS TO KNOW.—If you are under eighteen years of age you cannot be compelled to work more than seventy-four hours a week as a shop assistant.

ELTHAM.—Card playing without stakes is perfectly legal in public houses. Billiards is a game of skill, and does not come within the same category.

HOUSEWIFE.—It is said that a section of a good strong onion, if left in a freshly-painted room, will neutralise and absorb the smell of paint so disagreeable to most people.

C. C. C.—A gallon contains 231 cubic inches; as a cubic foot is equal to 1,728 cubic inches, it must therefore contain nearly 7½ gallons. The ale gallon contains 282 cubic inches, but is rarely used at the present day.

R. DAVIS.—Political or religious questions are never discussed in these columns, and it is therefore useless for any correspondent to send such letters to us. Ask any of your friends to give you an opinion of the persons named.

CYANILLAR.—Sulphur and water will remove dandruff. Use it in the proportions of one teaspoonful of sulphur to one pint of water. Wash off with clear water. Keep the sulphur and water in a bottle, and apply about twice a week.

M. H.—1. The name of the town is pronounced Derby: the name of the peer Darby. 2. In case of distrust the lodger may protect his goods by giving an inventory of them to the distraining party, and tendering to him any rent due to his immediate landlord.

CHRISTIANE.—Common washing soda will sometimes remove warts, if they be soaked in it from time to time. Nitrate of silver is the most effectual remedy. Be careful in applying it, so as not to burn the skin. It can be procured at any druggist's, with directions, &c.

AGNES.—If the human organism is in good condition, there is no reason why a person's skin should become sallow. Take plenty of exercise, eat healthy food, bathe frequently, lead a regular life, and the roses on your cheeks will bloom again, unless some incurable disease is set up in the system.

V. C.—Instead of arranging clandestine meetings with the lady of your choice, go to her parents and get their permission to visit her at her home. We are certain that a straightforward statement of the case, backed up by the persuasive eloquence of their daughter, will soften their hearts and bring about the desired end.

ELFIE.—The best way to treat a bad cold, such as you describe, is to try and nip it in the bud. Go to bed, which should be warmed, pile on the clothes, take a hot drink, such as black-currant tea or well-seasoned clear soup, and try to get into a profuse perspiration. This will generally expel an ordinary chill from the system.

KEITH NORMAN.—Artificial honey, which is more common in the market than consumers know, is made of potato starch and oil of vitriol. Some rash optimists think that they are sure of getting the genuine product of bees and flowers by purchasing honey in the comb. Deluded mortals! The exquisite white comb that pleases them is often made of paraffin wax.

CLARE.—As you are on intimate terms with the gentleman, it would be perfectly proper to invite him to visit you at your home. We feel sure both of you will find it much more comfortable indoors than promenading about the streets. Concerning the explanation of his failing to keep the appointment, it seems very probable that it will be given when asked for by you.

ONLY A POOR BOY.—The reliability of the firm, and its ability to carry out its contracts, is unknown to us. As a consequence, we beg to be excused from giving you advice either way. Rely on your own judgment, remembering that it is better to make £5 and save it than to risk £3 and lose it. Collect your money slowly, and do not worry because you cannot become suddenly rich. Perhaps by risking your small savings all may be irretrievably lost.

HOPELESS.—Many of the gentle sex grow up with the idea that marriage is a matter of the first importance in life, and, believing this, accept the first offer made them, no matter what the character or standing of the man may be. Thus it is that so many unhappy marriages are made, and the sacred bond is severed so often by resorting to legal proceedings. Even though you are twenty-five, there is no reason why you should dread being an "old maid." It were far better to remain single than to commit the grievous mistake of marrying some worthless fellow, who, after the glamour of the honeymoon has passed away, will show plainly that the tie binding him to you has become irksome. Bide your time, and feel assured that the day is not distant when the "right one" will claim the one who shall always remain the queen of his heart, and prove a blessing to him as long as life shall last.

WILLIE'S PET.—It is an idle story; some one must have been poking fun at you.

INQUIRER.—Consult a bookseller. There are several works on the subject. We have no knowledge of the one you mention.

TRIOUBLED JEM.—It is very difficult to say where you would be likely to find the deers. They probably remained in private possession. The present owner would be the most probable custodian. We never reply by post.

SAILOR LAD.—Admiral Sir Parry Wallis, who quite recently reached the age of ninety-eight, is said to be the oldest naval officer in the world. His first voyage was made eighty-five years ago, in a frigate built in the reign of George I.

WAITING.—Parents can prevent a son who is under age from marrying, but if a son, being a minor, marries without the knowledge of his parent, such a marriage is valid. However, should a misrepresentation of age have been made, the registrar is enabled to prosecute.

SCHOOLBOY.—1. The sixpences of the Jubilee coinage are the only ones that have any special value attached to them; the other Jubilee coins are of ordinary value. 2. We believe not at present; in a few years no doubt they will be valuable. 3. No. 4. We are unable to say.

W. J. K.—The cry of "Hear, hear," so common in Parliament, was originally "Hear him," and was first used to remind members of the duty of attending to the discussions there; but it gradually became what it now is, a cry indicative of admiration, acquiescence, indignation, or decision, according to the tone indulged in.

TO A BEAUTIFUL CHILD.

I know thee, fond one as thou art,
Young, and beautiful, and fair;
With sunlight resting on thy brow,
And on thy waving hair.

I smile to see thy radiant smile—
I weep to see thee weep;
And when I gaze on thee awhile,
Strange musings o'er me creep.

Say, art thou destined for this earth?
Or is thy form so light,
But fancy as it wanders on
Before my ravished sight?

Sweet child of budding innocence,
Thou art too fair for earth;
And wisely may I deem thee now
An angel in thy birth.

But still, as years glide swift away,
The false, deceitful art
Of those who are not what they seem,
May blight thy gentle heart.

'Tis vain for me to think
That thou wilt always be
So pure, so fair, so free from care,
For earth has charms for thee.

Still, let virtue guide thee on
Through paths of fadeless flowers;
And shield thee safe from every sin,
In pleasure's giddy hours.

R. T. E.

WORRIED COOK.—I have been told, on good authority, that strewing the kitchen floor with fresh rhubarb leaves, smooth side down, is an almost infallible remedy. The leaves, beetles, &c., should be all swept up in the morning and carefully burnt; the process being repeated for a few days till the nuisance is abated. I have not tried this, but I have every confidence in the cook who told it to me on his own experience.

JANIE.—Brush your hair neatly back from the ears, and straight across the head from the forehead to the nape of the neck, and just here collect the hair with a slide, which you can purchase at any hairdresser's. It is like a long, flat brooch, and keeps the hair secure without injury. You may tie ribbon over this. The ends of hair may be curled and left loose or turned up again, or if very luxuriant plait it and turn up the ends and tie over the alids.

C. J. P.—1. Jettison is the term applied to the throwing overboard of a ship's cargo, either in whole or in part, in cases of necessity, so as to lighten the vessel in a storm, or to prevent capture, or for any other justifiable cause, as in the case of the rescue of the passengers from the steamship *Danmark* by the captain and crew of the *Missouri*. As a matter of course, great discretion must be exercised in judging whether the circumstances will permit of such a desperate expedient, and when only a portion of the ship's cargo is thus sacrificed, good judgment must be displayed in selecting that portion. The captain of the vessel is therefore compelled to weigh the matter very carefully, and cannot be accountable for losses by such a procedure if he presents satisfactory proof that it was the only alternative he had in order to save his ship or the lives of those who depended on his assistance, as in the case quoted. Satisfaction for losses of this kind is usually given by resorting to the doctrine of general average—that is, a contribution is made in proportion to their respective interests, by the owners of the ship, freight, and goods on board, or by the insurers of these, as the case may be. Goods thrown overboard are estimated at the price they would have yielded at the port of delivery at the time, freight, duties, &c., being deducted. 2. May 31, 1861, fell on Friday, as did also April 30, 1847.

A. J.—You have certainly made a great mistake in addressing the young lady without an introduction. You had better see her father, and try to arrange with him. Of course, after all, she may not be willing, but you must take your chance like a man.

IGNORANCE.—It is your husband's; the Married Women's Property Act did not come into force until January 1, 1883; each of you can dispose only of that which strictly belongs to you; there ought to be a distinct understanding as to the limits of ownership, and to that end you would do well to have legal aid in the drawing up of all documents.

OLD MAID.—Shoe-buckles came into England with the Restoration, and became so large, costly, and popular that at one time their manufacture gave employment to four thousand people in Birmingham alone. When shoe-strings, always affected by the Puritans and Quakers, resumed their sway, the buckle-makers petitioned the Prince of Wales to try to avert their ruin. This he endeavoured to do by wearing buckles himself and commanding his household to follow his example.

CRUELDOUS.—In Ceylon there survived to the present century a principle of religion that the last person seen in the company of a person dying by violence was guilty of his death. This theory led to strange developments. A man would commit suicide in the presence of his enemy; a discharged servant would similarly revenge his disgrace upon his employer; a creditor would threaten suicide as a last resource against a procrastinating debtor. Such a threat was never in vain.

SORELY TAID.—Do not distress yourself too much about the youth's defective spelling. He must read as much as possible, and his eye will gradually become educated until he will be able to pick out a mispelt word with unerring precision. Some of the cleverest literary men cannot spell certain words correctly; the disposition to error seems to be constitutional. One thoroughly able man persists in spelling "grammar" with an "e," and no amount of pains can cure him; as, after all, you need not be in despair about your youth.

ALL TRUE.—A well-known authority describes the seven wonders of the world in ancient times, as follows:

"The Pyramids first, which in Egypt were laid;
Next Babylon's Gardens, for Amytis made;
Then Mausolus' tomb of affection and guilt;
Fourth, the Temple of Dian, in Ephesus built;
The Colossus of Rhodes, cast in brass, to the sun
Sixth, Jupiter's statue, by Phidias done;
The Pharos of Egypt, last wonder of old,
Or Palace of Cyrus, cemented with gold."

WOULD-BE WALKER.—A grease for boots is recommended which is said to completely prevent sore feet, and so protect pedestrians from the whole train of familiar afflictions caused by that minor accident. The ointment is made of four parts of lard, four parts of olive oil, and one part of caoutchouc—raw rubber, which are melted together on a slow fire. Having moistened the sole of the boot with water, the inventor warms the boot in a stove or before a fire, and then smears it over with the compound. The boot is said to become soft, pliable, shiny, waterproof, and even more durable.

NURSE.—The powder sold at ordinary perfumers should never be used with a young baby; it often contains substances which, although innocuous to older people, are poisonous, or nearly so, to the skin of an infant. Either fuller's earth, procured from a reliable chemist, should be used, or home-made starch powder. A good old-fashioned recipe for making this is the following: Put some best starch into a soup plate, and pour over it a little whisky—just as much only as it will absorb. Put the plate into a warm oven until the starch is quite dry, roll it into powder, and sift through close muslin. This will be found very beneficial for the skins of infants.

A READER FROM THE FIRST.—The exclamation "Hurrah" is probably a corruption of "Tur ah" (Thor ald), a battler of the ancient Norsemen, and is common to many nations. On the other hand, M. Lettré, a celebrated French philologist, says it is derived from the Slavonic "Hurs" (to Paradise). In India and Ceylon the mahouts and attendants of baggage elephants cheer them on by perpetually crying "Ur-rei!" The Arabs and camel drivers in Turkey, Palestine, and Egypt encourage their animals to speed by shouting "Arrei! arrei!" The Moors in Spain drive their mules with repetitions of "Arre!" In France the sportsman excites the hounds by his shouts of "Hare! hare!" while the herdsmen of Ireland and Scotland use "Hurrah! hurrah!" to urge on the cattle they are driving.

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